

# STEELDRUM



news for members of Steelworkers Local 1998

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## Job evaluation process begins

*Innis College kicks off process; four new members join JEC*

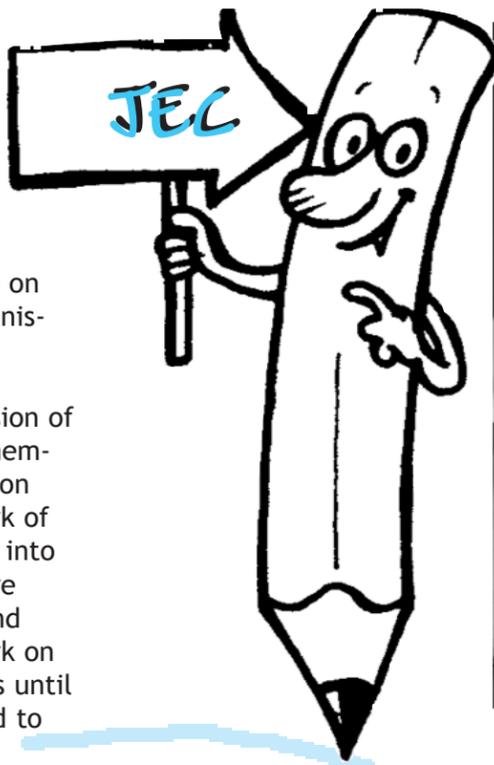
The Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) has completed the evaluation of all benchmark jobs and is in the process of rating them with the university. On January 28, 2004, administrative staff at Innis College became the first to have their jobs evaluated. Administrative staff at New College began their job evaluation on February 4. They will be followed by administrative staff at University College and Woodsworth College.

The new year also witnessed the expansion of the JEC. On January 12, 2004, four new members joined principals Ana Sapp, Robin Breon and PC Choo on the committee as the work of the JEC moves from the benchmark phase into the actual job evaluation process. They are Mary Bird, Marisa Freire, Shelley Glazer and Kristina Smith. The new members will work on full time release from their university jobs until June 2005. The additional resources added to the JEC come as a result of the Needs Assessment that was conducted by the USWA Executive and passed by the membership last fall.

The new members of the committee bring a diverse range of skill sets and experience to the JEC that will greatly advance the work of the committee in the months ahead.

**Mary Bird** is an administrator for Health Services in the Koffler Building and has been active in job evaluation since the mid-80s when she served on the joint UTSA/U of T working group on pay equity. In addition, she has been an active member of the Union's Job Evaluation Committee and the Women of Steel Committee.

**Marisa Freire**, administrative assistant with



JEC Team: *Back row, left to right:* P.C. Choo, Robin Breon, Mary Bird\*, Marisa Freire\*, Shelley Glazer\*; *Front row, left to right:* Ana Sapp, Kristina Smith\*  
\* New team members

the Master of Teaching Program and Liaison Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology at OISE/UT, has had several progressive positions within the University since 1985 and has also served as the Union's Unit Chair for OISE (she will be replaced by Alan Revich during her release time period).

**Shelley Glazer** works at the University's Counselling and Learning Skills Services and brings 30 years of experience as a counsellor and psychotherapist to the JEC. Shelley also has extensive experience in community education/development and has worked with a

very diverse range of community and educational organizations.

**Kristina Smith** is an administrative assistant in the Department of Speech-Language Pathology, Clinical Education and Academic Affairs and has considerable experience with web development/design and database software applications.

The JEC plans to conclude the project by the expiration of the present Collective Bargaining Agreement in June, 2005.

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

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## Local 1998 denied speaking privileges at Governing Council

*Our voice will not be silenced*

If you look at the front page of our Collective Agreement you will see that our employer is actually the Governing Council of the University of Toronto. The Council is comprised of 50 members, 25 of whom are elected and represent students, alumni, faculty and administrative staff. The remaining 25 are appointed by the provincial government and the President of the university who himself is also a member.

The Council oversees all facets of university administration, including academic and business affairs.

As members of Local 1998, our Collective Agreement governs the essentials of our relationship with the Governing Council but there are issues of interest to us such as park-



ing fees and pension fund investments which we are not yet able to influence through collective bargaining. As interested and knowledgeable stakeholders, our opinion should be heard on other issues that may not directly impact us but do have an influence on our larger university community.

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# who we are



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### Newsletter Committee

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## Multicultural Calendar February to August 2004

### February

**African Heritage/Black History Month**  
\* 1st *Eid al-Adha*  
\* 14th *Valentine's Day*  
\* 15th *Canada Flag Day*  
\* 18th *Heritage Day*  
\* 25th *Ash Wednesday*

### March

**National Nutrition Month**  
\* 7th *Purim*  
\* 8th *International Women's Day*  
\* 17th *St. Patrick's Day*  
\* 20th *First Day of Spring*  
\* 21st *International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*

### April

**Earth Month**  
\* 1st *April Fool's Day*  
\* 4th *Palm Sunday*  
\* 4th *Daylight Savings Time Begins*  
\* 5th *Passover*  
\* 11th *Easter Sunday*  
\* 12th *Easter Monday*  
\* 22nd *Earth Day*  
\* 23rd *Secretaries Day*  
\* 26th - 30th *National Volunteer Week*

### May

**South Asian Heritage Month**  
\* 9th *Mother's Day*  
\* 21st *Canada Health Day*  
\* 24th *Victoria Day*  
\* 24th - 28th *Aboriginal Awareness Week*

### June

**Seniors Month**  
\* May 31st - June 4th *Canadian Environment Week*  
\* 5th *World Environment Day*  
\* 20th *Father's Day*  
\* 21st *First Day of Summer*  
\* 24th *Saint Jean-Baptiste Day*  
\* 27th *National Multicultural Day*  
\* 21st - 27th *Pride Week*

### July

\* 1st *Canada Day*  
\* 16th - 25th *Beaches International Jazz Festival*

### August

\* 2nd *Civic Holiday*  
\* 12th *International Youth Day*  
\* 15th *National Acadian Day*

## St. Michael's College report

In all union elections, a great deal of time is spent in the weeks leading up to the actual election. Tellers' elections, confirmation of candidates' eligibility and campaigning, are but a few of the tasks necessary in preparation for an efficient, fair election. For those who choose to be part of this process, it can be a great experience. There are many "highs" and "lows" during the election process.

At St. Michael's it took approximately eight weeks from the time the Tellers were chosen to election day.

When one hears about the poor voter turnout in provincial and federal elections, one cannot help but wonder about our local union elections and we can somehow provide the spark necessary to motivate your fellow workers to become involved and ultimately cast a vote. According to P.C. Choo from the union office, we had an 80.6% voter turnout and I am proud to say the majority of votes were in my favour. I will leave it to others to decide what the spark was, but I am sure it had something to do with the following.

The union members at St. Michael's wanted to keep the strong Union Steward team that has served them so well over the years. Laurel-Ann Finn had been our Unit Chair and in doing so, she set the tone on bargaining and organizing. Although stepping down from the Chairperson's position, she will remain active as a Steward. Giuseppe Carnevale, who has earned a reputation as a tough and active Union Grievor, will remain in that position. The time he has spent on courses relating to labour issues has proven to be a valuable asset to our team.

I have been a Steward for a relatively short time, but with the support of my colleagues, I am confident that we can handle all union business at St. Mike's. The margin of victory and voter turnout speaks volumes for continuing on a strong path of employee representation and accountability of our administration on matters that affect our members.

*Dave Johnson, Unit Chair, St. Michael's College*

## Human Rights Committee report

### Upcoming courses:

- **Human Rights:** March 15th - 19th, 2004 and - November 1st - 5th, 2004. Human Rights are workers rights; we encourage all members to take the Human Rights/Workers Rights Course.
- **Women of Steel-Visible Minority:** March 1st - 5th

### Upcoming Meetings:

- **Steelworkers Toronto Area Council Quarterly Human Rights Cttee Meetings**  
- January 30th (Other dates yet to be determined)  
- One member from the Local 1998 Human Rights Committee requiring release time may attend these meetings
- **Next Local 1998 Human Rights Committee Meeting**  
- April

### Events:

- **African Heritage Month:** Thursday February 26th, 2004  
**Speaker:** Yvonne Bobb Smith PhD  
**Topic:** "Independence: A vehicle of resistance" **Location:** Sidney Smith Hall, Room 1073
- **National Nutrition Month**  
Thursday March 25th, 2004  
**Speaker:** Dr. Sandra Anthony **Topic:** Nutrition **Location:** Medical Sciences Building, Room 3268

If you have a topic of interest you would like addressed or for more info, contact Marcella Bollers [mbollers@uswa1998.ca](mailto:mbollers@uswa1998.ca) or Linda Oliver [linda.oliver@utoronto.ca](mailto:linda.oliver@utoronto.ca)

### Committee Reports

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## Dave Johnson Elected Unit Chair at St. Michael's College

Dave Johnson has been elected the new Unit Chair at the University of St. Michael's College in a by-election held on February 3, 2004.

He received a total of 45 votes to beat Miguel Reymundo who received 9 votes. Over 80% of eligible voters (54 out of 67) cast their ballots.

Johnson replaced Laurel-Ann Finn who stepped down recently.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The Executive held an all day strategic planning session in January to discuss the issues which should be priorities for our local over the next six months and the upcoming year.

### Strategic Planning Session:

Everyone agreed that preparing for negotiations on the next contract is crucial, as is continuing to develop strategies on re-organization and budget cuts. Economists from the Steelworkers Research Department are currently working on analyzing financial data for us that will be invaluable in dealing with the university budget. We are also working on joint initiatives with the Faculty and the other campus unions on this issue and planning phase 2 of our media campaign.

At O.I.S.E., Jane Gaskell, the new dean, has indicated that a 15% cut to the operating budget is on the books for the upcoming year. With such radical surgery as this draconian cut, one has to ask if the patient will survive. One can only wonder why such a drastic cut is necessary at a university that recently raised \$1 billion. Surely donors donate to U of T with the understanding that its foundation is much more than literal bricks and mortar, and that staff contribute significantly to the mission of the university by providing a high quality of service to students, faculty and the public. This cut will affect the quality of service provided to students and faculty and increase workload and stress related problems among staff. The example at O.I.S.E. is extreme, but it clearly illustrates why our local and the other campus unions need to develop coordinated strategies on re-organization and budget cuts.

Continuing to expand our membership education program and improving membership involvement are both very important to the development of a membership driven local, and the Executive agreed that it is important to continue our work on these two areas. At the March Executive meeting we will continue to develop our plans for the next year.

### Education:

Ten Local 1998 members took the Union Counsellor course in February and everyone reported they found the course very practical and one that will be beneficial for our members. As well, we are working on establishing a union counsellor network across campus. These union counsellors will be able to provide assistance to members who are experiencing personal or family difficulties and may not know about resources available to them in the broader community and at the university, such as the

**'One can only wonder why a 15% cut is necessary at a university that just raised 1 billion dollars.'**

**- Allison Dubarry, President**

Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

At the end of February, the "You and Your Union" course will be offered again to members. This is a one-day course that explains how the union works, the structure of the union, the relationship between our local and the Steelworkers and services offered by the union. The instructors will also answer any questions that members may have. Our Executive intends to have this course offered on a regular basis. Members who took it in the past found it interesting and worthwhile.

### Did you vote for change this fall?

This fall Ontarians voted for change and for an end to eight years of program and service cutbacks. Public services, such as healthcare and education, were primary issues for Ontarians. Residents voted to end the strangulation of public services by the Tory government. However, these services, including education, are still facing underfunding as the Liberal government prepares its first budget and tries to get public input on how to deal with the Tory deficit. Our union has made a submission to the hearings, and wants public services, including education, strengthened.

At an Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) meeting in January, a speaker announced that a 9% cut to colleges and universities is being floated at Queen's Park. Those of us who work at U of T know that a 9% cut will have disastrous consequences for public education. Dalton McGuinty has stated that tax increases are not an option to deal with the budget; Hugh Mackenzie disagrees.

Mackenzie, the former head of the Steelworkers Research Department and currently a research associate at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, believes that closing the corporate tax loopholes provided by the Tory

government and introducing a modest tax increase, will deal concretely with Ontario's deficit problem. Mackenzie calculated that over \$1 billion a year could be returned to Ontarians if the tax loopholes introduced by Harris and Eves were closed, and another \$1.1 billion would be returned to the public purse if the exemptions from the Employer Health Tax, introduced by the Tories were also removed. A better system of collection of taxes needs to be introduced to ensure that public services are not starved by those who do not pay what they owe. Mackenzie believes that Ontario is faced with a structural deficit and that cutting services without increasing revenue will only prolong the problem and weaken the network of public services that we all depend on. The cuts in healthcare have already had an impact for us at the negotiating table as we have had to negotiate additions to the healthcare coverage at U of T to ensure that members continue to have access to services previously covered by OHIP.

"The Premier has been reported as ruling out tax increases as a starting point for public consultation in advance of the budget. That premise is not acceptable," says Hugh Mackenzie. "It ignores the underlying causes for the province's fiscal difficulties and is a recipe for a re-run of public service cuts on a scale comparable to the cuts imposed in the first years of the Harris regime."

A 2% increase in taxes would raise \$1.25 billion in the first year (\$60 a year or \$1.00 a week for median taxpayers and \$130 a year or \$2.50 a week for taxpayers with average incomes). Mackenzie believes that this increase

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FARES ARE KEPT AFFORDABLE  
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ASK PREMIER MCGUINITY TO KEEP HIS PROMISE AND FUND THE TTC.

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*The Labour Council's Poster Campaign for Public Transit.*

would allow the Liberals to fulfill their campaign promises of restoring public services and the increased revenue would allow them to balance the budget in the last year of their term. It is not a lot of money from each person to ensure that Ontarians once again have access to good healthcare and education and that the underlying problems of the deficit are addressed concretely.

*Hugh Mackenzie's papers on the budget can be found online at [www.policyalternatives.ca](http://www.policyalternatives.ca)*

## Democracy denied by Governing Council

*continued from page 1*

The Governing Council has a long standing tradition of accepting submissions from campus groups about issues which are to be decided at Governing Council meetings. That being the case, you might think it reasonable that Local 1998 be allowed to present its views on an initiative that has considerable impact on our members who work at U of T Schools. (Governing Council has decided that UTS will be restructured to become an organization with its own governance, independent of the University.) Yet

when our Vice-President Robin Breon asked for this courtesy, he was refused.

When questioned by administrative staff representative Brian Davis and part time student representative Chris Ramsaroop, Governing Council Chair Thomas Simpson said that the refusal was in accordance with G.C. policies.

I think it is clear from this that Local 1998 needs a voice at Governing Council. The upcoming election for an



administrative staff position on the Council provides us with an opportunity to do this. Current staff representative Brian Davis has done a great job for us but I am sure that he would welcome another union voice in addition to his. As the largest employee group at the U of T, Local 1998 should have one of its own at the Governing Council table.

*John Malcolm, Unit Chair, Erindale*

*John Malcolm served on Governing Council from 1997-98*

*Interview with Mary Margaret Fonow, author  
Union Women: Forging Feminism in the United  
Steelworkers of America  
University of Minnesota Press,  
Minneapolis, Mn. 2003, 250 pp.*

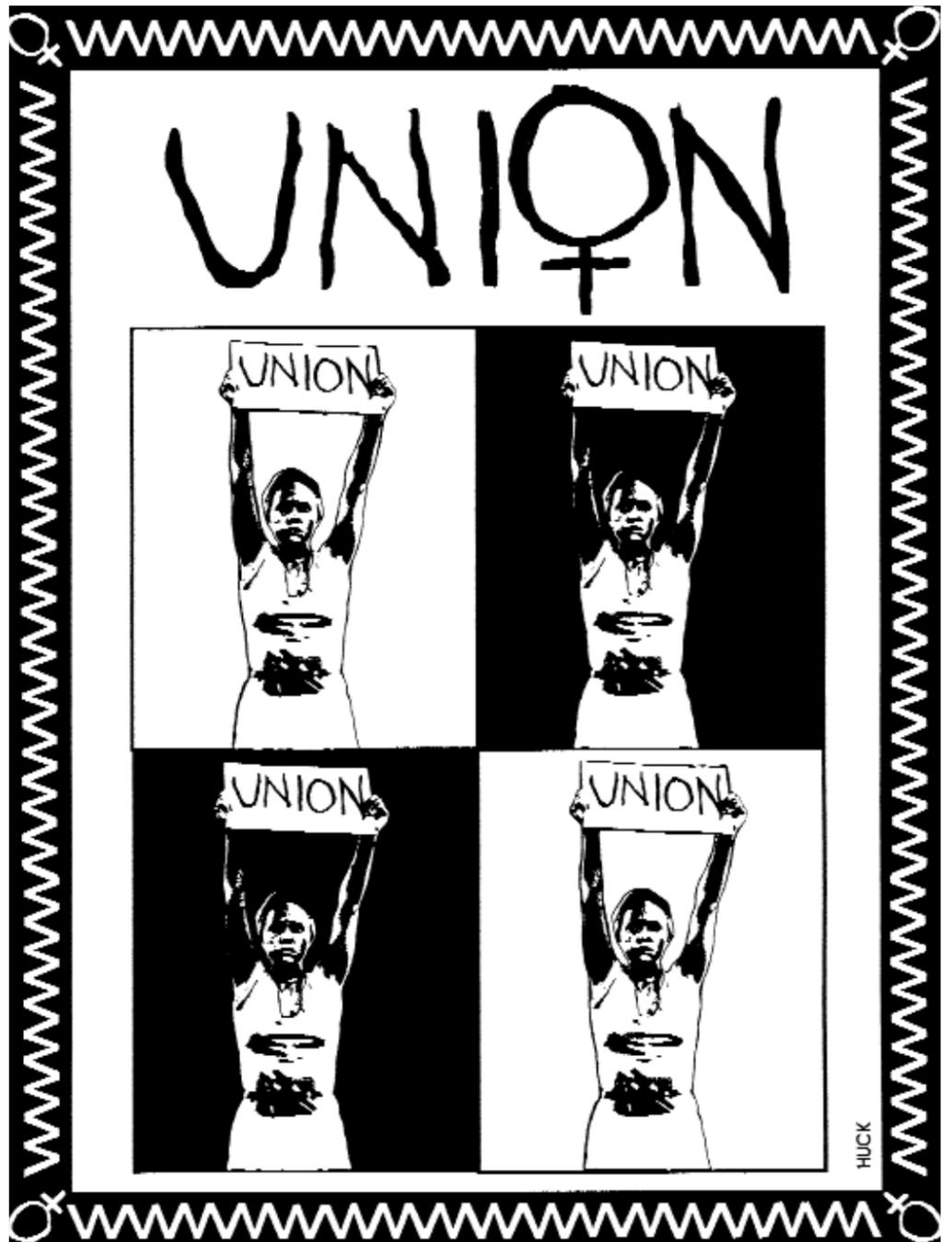
**Steeldrum:** *What drew you toward this subject? Given the Steelworkers early history with women, it seems like an unlikely topic.*

**Mary Margaret Fonow:** I like to think the topic chose me and not the other way around. I grew up in Steubenville, Ohio (35 miles west of Pittsburgh) during the 50's and 60's when the steel industry dominated the region. My best friend, Sissy Humienny, whom I write about in the book, took a job at the local steel mill in 1975. She was part of a pioneer group of American women hired by the industry under a court-ordered affirmative action decree. The steel industry in America was required by the U.S. Justice Department to hire women on the same basis as men. Sissy and I talked endlessly about her experiences in the mill, and she introduced me to many of the women who eventually became a part of my study. At the time, I was a graduate student in Sociology at Ohio State University and because of the women's movement and the birth of women's studies, I was permitted to write a dissertation about women.

**Steeldrum:** *It is such an honest and thorough history of women in the Steelworkers Union, but as I read it I was struck by a sense of repeated missed opportunities. For example, the failure to integrate so many women who had taken on male-dominated jobs during WWII, and the failure of many to comply with consent decree legislation. Would you talk about some of those missed opportunities?*

# inter view with Mary Margaret Fonow Author, *Union Women: Forging Feminism in the United Steelworkers of America*

**Mary Margaret Fonow:** What can I say? Change is difficult. Even though some women wanted to stay in the industry after the war, the opportunity was simply not there. But I do not see this as a missed opportunity—well, not entirely. The foundation of the civil rights movement, and, I have come to believe, of the contemporary women's movement was laid during and after WWII. These missed opportunities were not lost on the political consciousness of African-American men or women. Even during the war, civil rights activists were pointing out the hypocrisy of asking black men to participate in the fight for democracy abroad when their economic and political rights at home were so restricted—and they were mobilizing. While women were forced out of non-traditional occupations, they did not leave the workforce, nor did they give up organizing. This is true of both countries—more Canadian women stayed in the labour market after WWII at higher rates than their sisters in the U.S. Women from organized labour were key players in keeping the goals of the women's movement alive after the war in both countries, and they were present during the founding moments of the second wave of the women's movement. My historical approach allowed me to see that both the formation of a social movement and change itself are part of a long process. Sometimes the work of activists is highly visible and, at other times, their work is hidden and behind the scenes. It is not until the 60s, 70s, and 80s that there is enough human rights and civil rights legislation to make a difference in the lives of working women. Thus, anti-discrimination policies and equity norms are relatively new phenomena.



**Steeldrum:** *The Calumet example is such an interesting example of social movements in greater society galvanizing the women's movement within the union. Would you describe for our readers why you think the issues came together in Calumet? Also, do you see the potential for such a confluence of influences today?*

**Mary Margaret Fonow:** The issues came together in the Calumet (south Chicago and northwest Indiana) region in the US for a number of reasons. Geographically, this region had the greatest number of steelworkers and the highest concentration of black workers. The civil rights movement was highly mobilized and had elected one of the nation's first black mayors, Richard Hatcher, of Gary, Indiana. Nearly half of all the women who went into the mills in this region under the consent decree were African-American, and many of these women brought with them a consciousness about race discrimination and a history of civil rights activism. In fact the model for the women's caucus that I talk about in the book came from these black workers. Some of the black women were active in both the women's caucus and the black caucus. This region of the U.S. also has a very rich labour history and had an active rank-and-file insurgency movement during the 70s. The women's movement was very active in this region because Illinois had not ratified the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment). So it was here that the left, the civil rights movement, and the women's movement came together. All of these movements provided resources for the women steelworkers. Today, globalization has presented new challenges to the Steelworkers Union, and here the Canadians have been the important actors in helping the union to fashion a response to these new pressures. Today's problems require a different type of response, one that is more transnational and coordinated across national borders. These times require a

united front effort involving organized labour, social movements, grass roots community organizations, and transnational non-governmental agencies.

**Steeldrum:** *You really make the point that unions build democracy from the ground up. Today in the U.S. and Canada we're seeing a decline in democracy. For example, in our recent election we had the second smallest voter turnout in our provincial history. Do you see the Steelworkers Union on the front line for democratizing the work force and the political sphere? Would you explain how?*

**Mary Margaret Fonow:** It seems that democracy is diminishing at least for the working and middle classes. This is particularly true in the US where we have a president who was not elected to office but appointed by the Supreme Court. He has a mandate from the rich, and he knows it. Our rich are paying the lowest amount of taxes since taxes began to be collected. One political party outspends all the others by a ten-to-one margin. So wealth dominates. Canadians have a different political system - one that is more representative than the one we have in the U.S. Plus Canada has a labour-oriented party in the NDP. Even though turnout is decreasing in both countries, union members have a much higher turnout than nonunion households. The realities of globalization are felt most directly in the workplace, and it is here that unions have the history and experience to revitalize democracy.

**Steeldrum:** *In the Making Waves Chapter you make the point that affirmative action and consent decree were based on individual rights in relation to group discrimination and the tensions that arose between those individual rights and collective gains made by the Union. For example, some locals were afraid affirmative action would negate seniority. On the other hand, in the globalization chapter, you make the point that international workers have moved toward a human rights model. Would you discuss the issue of union women organizing in relation to individual rights, human rights, and collective bargaining? How can we balance these issues? How have the Steelworkers progressed toward balancing these issues?*

**Mary Margaret Fonow:** What I find interesting about the Steelworkers is that they represent workers in two different political systems with very different equity laws and labour laws. In Canada it is legal to treat members of an historically disadvantaged group differently if the goal is to eliminate the effects of past discrimination. The Canadian human rights law recognizes social and cultural difference, but the U.S. equity law does not. Here everybody has to be treated the same. Very few countries now look to the US as a model for equity jurisprudence. Here white people can and do use the equity law to say that they were discriminated against. I believe that the Canadians have a lot to teach the Americans about pursuing an equality that can respect difference.

**Steeldrum:** *The Globalization chapter makes such a strong case for the current power of a feminized union and yet that is such a sharp contrast to earlier chapters which discussed the Steelworker Union's slow and reluctant*

*road toward feminization. I never really understood how that transformation occurred. It seemed to be an indirect result of restructuring and the loss of jobs, the Canadian organizing drives, and globalization. Can you explain how the Steelworkers transformed the Union into a feminist force?*

**Mary Margaret Fonow:** It is still a work in progress, but the transformation is a combination of structural factors like globalization, restructuring, new organizing campaigns, and the work feminists within the Steelworkers did to mobilize women into "Women of Steel." As their movement gained momentum and strength, they were in a better position to influence the practices and policies of the union. I argue that these women forged a particular type of feminism in response to their location in a male-dominated union. These women are combining the principles and practices of trade unionism with the principles and practices of feminism and coming up with a unique type of political activism - an activism that I believe will influence the labour movement and the women's movement.

**Steeldrum:** *The Canadian educational Women of Steel course becomes such a powerful tool for union transformation in the book that you made me want to take the course. You talked about women developing self-confidence, the ability to organize, and to create activist networking strategies when they come out of the course. How important is that course to the Union, and why?*

**Mary Margaret Fonow:** You also talk about the importance of women's committees, as well as the hard-fought and hard-won battles to create women's committees in the Steelworkers Union. How important do you think women's committees are to today's Steelworkers Union? Are there ways we can honour our past fight, and forge our future?

I think the course and the women's committees are important to the union for a number of reasons. They give the union an opportunity to identify women who want to be more active in the union, and they serve as a gateway to broader forms of union participation.

Women typically go on from there to run for office, volunteer, or get more politically involved. The Steelworkers can only meet the challenges of globalization if they become truly representative of the new workers and new workplaces and form alliances with other unions, movements, organizations, and activists concerned with global justice. The majority of new workers are women, youth, immigrants, and minority men, so the new organizing campaigns will need to understand the needs and interests of these workers.

Women are important to the success of organizing and to the success of building alliances.

**Steeldrum:** *What is the kernel you really hope people will get out of your book?*

**Mary Margaret Fonow:** Activism can make a difference. Do not get discouraged; do not squander resources. Change takes as long as it takes.

Interview by  
Dr. Victoria Littman  
Accessibility Services

## Stelco: real reasons behind the bankruptcy

That Stelco filed for bankruptcy under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) on January 29, 2004, should come as no surprise. (See "Crisis in the steel industry: Interview with Rolf Gerstenberger", November 2003 issue of *Steeldrum*.)

Stelco claimed that its problems were caused by, among others, the "unaffordable legacy costs" of pensions and benefits for about 13,000 retired employees as well as its "high labour costs." The media lapped it all up and gave the general impression that the union is to blame.

Rolf Gerstenberger, President of Local 1005 at Stelco, concurred. "Stelco is trying to avoid the real solutions to problems confronting the steel industry," he said, describing the current state of the industry as a "crisis of overproduction and outdated capacity."

Gerstenberger says his term as President, which only began in April, has been characterized by continuous negotiations, with the company acting as if there is no contract in place.

"They want us to give up everything that had been negotiated. Once workers start on the road of giving concessions, it becomes a never-ending race to the bottom."

In an interview with the *Hamilton Spectator*, Gerstenberger responded to allegations that the union's position was too rigid. "It's not a reluctance to compromise, but we have the first claim."

"Nobody counts the fact we make the steel as worth anything," he continued. "They call us a 'cost of production', like we are natural gas or scrap metal. We make the steel and should have first claim on the wealth... The bankers and shareholders should get what's left, not the other way around."

Gerstenberger said it was too simple to blame Stelco's bankruptcy on poor management. "There is a general accusation of mismanagement, but when you have 40 or 50 steel companies in North America filing for bankruptcy protection, it's (too) simplistic to say 'bad management'."

"Myself, the workers, the union; we are the ones interested in saving the jobs. But we are also the ones who make the steel and the wealth... We're holding up our end of the bargain."

## Work should not hurt

What is RSI Awareness Day?

It is the day set aside each year to focus attention on the crippling disorders that are affecting more and more people in our workplaces and communities.

Join us to help raise awareness about RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) and the need for action aimed at prevention, rehabilitation and compensation.

**Date:** Sunday, February 29, 2004

**Location:** Toronto City Hall

**Time:** 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

**Bring your children, we are going to have an RSI skating party!**

**For additional information contact: Enzo Mancuso at 416. 441. 1939 ext. 3010 or Audrey Parks at 416. 461. 2411.**

*Event sponsored by: Toronto & York Region Labour Council, Toronto RSI Support Group, Injured Workers' Consultants, Ontario Federation of Labour, Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers, Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic, the Workers Health & Safety Centre and the Canadian Auto Worker.*

# Committee reports, continued

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## Grievance Committee

**W**e first wish to thank all of our unit chairs and stewards. Our members continually benefit from a tremendous group of committed individuals (a complete list is available at [www.uswa1998.ca](http://www.uswa1998.ca)). While we currently have a large number (29) of stewards, we are looking for more, particularly in Engineering, Sidney Smith Hall, Medical Sciences Building, Rotman, Operations and Services, Dentistry, Scarborough College and the Casual Bargaining Unit. We offer comprehensive training for all of our stewards. If you are interested in becoming a steward, please contact either one of us at 416. 506. 9090.

We have been assisting members with a variety of situations ranging from improper pay, discrimination/harassment/bullying, improper discipline, failure to hire and failure to migrate from the casual unit to the staff-appointed unit.

### Unit Meetings

We believe that it is very important for the union to keep you up-to-date on various issues. We have been holding unit meetings in various areas and will continue to host them on a regular basis. Over the next few months, we plan to host lunch-hour unit meetings in Arts and Sciences, Dentistry, Central Administration and OISE. If you have any suggestions regarding upcoming meetings (topics or locations), please contact your unit chair/steward.

### Casual Bargaining Unit

One of our priorities is to ensure that our casual bargaining unit members are treated fairly. We have resolved a grievance for a casual member who was fired without just cause and grievances for a number of casual bargaining unit members who did not migrate to staff-appointed positions. The collective agreement states that casual members automatically migrate to the staff-appointed unit if they have been working a minimum of 40% for 2 consecutive years or for 18 months working 60% or more. Some departments at the University have attempted to abuse this system, giving our casuals brief breaks in service (e.g. 2-3 weeks), and then arguing they should not migrate. The union's position is this is a bad-faith practice and casuals in this situation should automatically migrate to the staff-appointed unit. It is often difficult for the union to monitor this situation and we ask that, if you are aware of this happening in your area, you let us know.

### Layoffs/Re-deployment Pool

We are aware that a number of individuals have received layoff notices recently (especially at OISE/UT). Often members wrestle with issues regarding severance and the re-deployment pool. We can help. We also assist members who believe that their layoff is unjust (e.g. they have the most seniority in their department). If you are uncertain about the information in your layoff notice, we suggest that you speak with your steward/unit representative before deciding on your options (and signing any agreement with the university). We are also happy to report that all of the members who experienced a reorganization at Social Work were able to find positions in other departments at the university.

### Sick Leave/Long-Term Disability (LTD)

One of the "non-grievance" issues that we deal with regularly is working with members on Sick Leave, Long Term Disability (LTD) and/or return-to-work issues. Members who are on a sick leave/LTD are often under tremendous stress and dealing with medical and insurance requests can be very complex. Issues that arise include the type of information requested, who should fill out the forms and how to keep medical information private. While we hope that you never have to go on a health-related

leave, if this does occur, we can provide you with assistance and advice.

### Bullying/Harassment

Unfortunately, some of our members do experience bullying from their managers. It is the union's position that, while your manager does have the right to direct your work and assign duties, they must do so respectfully and reasonably. In other words, when your manager assigns tasks, they need to treat you with dignity and that any concerns must be raised constructively. Bullying is not a joke nor should it be considered an appropriate "management style". We have filed grievances for members who have experienced bullying.

### Improper Discipline/Improper Letters

We have filed grievances for a number of our members who have received disciplinary letters. One concern of the union is that, under the current Collective Agreement, the university can leave a letter in your file permanently. This means these letters stay in your personnel file for your entire career at the university and both your current and future departments will have access to them.

Through the grievance process, the union has been able to have letters modified (and, in some cases, removed). In many cases where the letters have not been removed immediately, the union has been able to negotiate a date for a letter to be removed from a member's file (better known as a "sunset clause").

### Seniority

The university has sent out notification to all members whose vacation was affected by the settlement as part of the original seniority grievance. The union and the university are meeting regularly regarding the seniority of all of the members who submitted forms this fall. While we hope to have these cases resolved shortly, it appears that the most contentious issue is the recognition of casual service. Once we have more details, we will be contacting all individuals who submitted the forms this fall.

### Mediation

The grievance process has up to four steps (depending on the reporting structure of the area). If the university and union are not able to come to a resolution after the fourth step, cases then can be referred to arbitration. Arbitration can be a long process (it can take 6-9 months to get an arbitration date) and the union and university have recently agreed to mediation on a number of cases. As a part of this process, the Union and University have resolved grievances on behalf of eight members. These grievances were for improper discipline, failure to hire and improper reorganization.

### A Final Reminder: Take Your Breaks

Did you know that, under our Collective Agreement (article 24:04), you are entitled to two paid fifteen minute breaks per day (if you are working full-time)? You are also entitled to either a one hour or thirty minute unpaid lunch - your schedule should be adjusted accordingly so that you work 36 ¼ hours per week (e.g. if you have a one-hour lunch, your work schedule could be from 8:45 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.). Many members do not take their breaks or their full lunch hour. We want to encourage you to take these breaks as they help to reduce your level of stress. If you have a workload related issue (you cannot get your work done in the allotted time), we suggest that you inform your supervisor of this issue and ask them to prioritize your work or approve overtime. Remember, unpaid overtime is a vicious cycle, which only serves to increase your workload.

Lillian Lanca and Ron Wener  
Co-chairs, Grievance Committee

## Victoria University report

**O**n January 21st and 27th the Union met with the University for full day mediation sessions in an attempt to resolve eight outstanding grievances. The details of the individual grievances are as follows:

### VC 2003-3 (Failure to post and fill fulltime Housekeeper positions)

This grievance was filed after the management hired non-bargaining unit employees to replace bargaining unit custodians who retired or who went on Long Term Disability (LTD). In a mediated settlement the University agreed to offer the three remaining union members part time (30 hours/week) housekeepers full time (40 hours/week) positions. Also, if, in the future, a bargaining unit custodian leaves and is replaced by a non-bargaining unit employee, the university agreed to meet with the union to explain their decision. The union retains full rights to file a grievance.

### VC 2003-4 (Improper scheduling of vacation)

A settlement was reached that in essence acknowledged that the union and the university maintain their different interpretations of when the university has the right to schedule vacations. Members should notify their steward as soon as possible if they are told by their supervisor when to take vacation time.

The union's position is that the university only has the right to schedule vacation time when an employee has more vacation time than they can carry forward into the next vacation year and the current vacation year is close to ending. The question of when in the vacation year the university has the right to schedule vacation depends on the specific circumstances of each case.

### VC 2003-5 (One day suspension)

Although we were unable to reach a settlement for this grievance during the mediation session, the university proposed a few options for settlement that the union and the member for whom the grievance was filed are considering.

### VC 2003-6 (Three day suspension)

The administration proposed a settlement that was rejected by the member for whom the grievance was filed. The Union is furthering the grievance to arbitration.

### VC 2003-9 (Denial of sick leave)

A settlement could not be reached in mediation. The local's Grievance Committee and Executive have since considered this grievance and decided that it did not merit being furthered to arbitration.

### VC 2003-10 (Denial of sick leave)

A settlement was reached for this grievance that provides for the member to be paid by the university for their entire sick leave.

### VC 2003-11 (Discharge without just cause)

The union filed the original grievance when a member who had been off on Long Term Disability (LTD) for a little less than three years was terminated because of innocent absenteeism (absenteeism through no fault of the employee). Our position was that the university could not terminate a member on LTD if the termination prevented them from continuing to accrue pensionable service. The university claimed that the pension plan allowed for a member on LTD to be terminated yet continue to accrue pensionable service. After examining the pension plan, the union had concerns that this was not the case. Through mediation a process to determine the proper interpretation of the pension plan was agreed upon. The university agreed to submit to the union a written explanation of their interpretation. We will have it analyzed by the Steelworkers Research Department and then respond. Dialogue with the management will continue if necessary.

### VC 2003-12 (Denial of sick leave)

After being on WSIB for several months, a member was deemed fit to return to work by a Board doctor. The member's own doctor disagreed and advised them not to return to work. When our member followed their doctor's advice, WSIB cut off payments. The member appealed the WSIB decision and applied for Short Term Disability from Victoria with the understanding that if their WSIB appeal was eventually approved, the university would be reimbursed. The administration denied the request for Short Term Disability.

Unfortunately we could not reach a mediated settlement with the administration to resolve this grievance. A decision on whether or not to go to arbitration will be made shortly. Updates on outstanding grievances will appear in future issues of the *Steeldrum*.

John Ankenman, Unit Chairperson, Victoria University

Interview by Margaret Martin

I recently had the pleasure of interviewing one of our talented artists, Susan Deshmukh, a member of Local 1998 and Department Secretary at Community Dentistry. Be sure to check out her upcoming art show, *Voice of Living Beings*, March 1 to April 30. She will be exhibiting her mosaic fine art panels made from more than 20,000 meticulously hand cut glass and ceramic pieces. The exhibit will include 15 new works. The opening reception is on March 12, 7-11:00 p.m., at 700 Mount Pleasant Rd. Meet the artist and enjoy live music performed by Out of The Blues, a local jazz ensemble.

**Steeldrum:** What type of art do you make, and what inspires you?

**SD:** I create mosaic fine art panels, sculptures, paintings, drawings and photographs. My works range from the abstract to the designative, and my inspiration is derived from a wide range of

materials in a way that will help viewers experience the mood, meaning and esthetics of my art without focusing initially on the actual materials I used to create the art.

**Steeldrum:** What artistic training have you had?

**SD:** Although I am a self-taught artist, I have taken courses in Old Masters drawing and painting, and this training often surfaces in my work: I love the play of dark and light tones, and I enjoy pushing even the simplest materials to their limits. I really enjoy the challenges involved in creating "paintings" from small pieces of glass or carving a "living" creature from a chunk of stone or wood.

**Steeldrum:** People interpret art in vari-

## An artist in our midst

ous ways, including internal issues and meditations, technology, and the natural environment. Experiences from my past and my travels often surface in my work, either directly or indirectly.

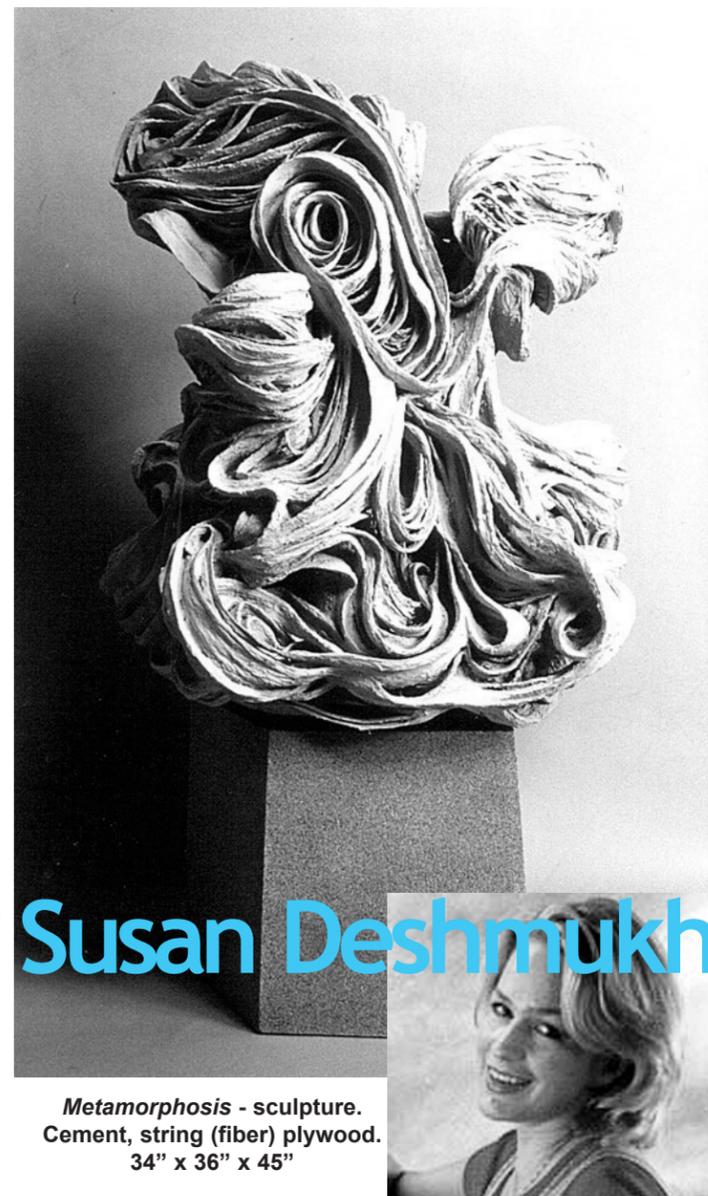
**Steeldrum:** What is it you are trying to accomplish when working with different materials?

**SD:** Whether I work with wood, metal, stone, glass, or ceramic tiles, my goal is to transform these seemingly static substances into dynamic works that resonate with delicacy, softness and pliancy. Part of my mission is to work with my

ous ways, so how do you interpret what you are trying to convey in your art?

**SD:** I believe that we can only achieve a genuine understanding of and respect for the natural environment by trying to gain a true understanding of ourselves. I think that people who know and respect themselves will more readily honour the environment - and the people they share it with. Thus, instead of concentrating initially on the outcome of my creative work, I usually begin by understanding and working with my inner connection to the materials. The actual process of creating a piece often becomes the message of my work, and many of my images evoke an inner story that is unique to each viewer.

**Steeldrum :** You have had many art shows in the past, and lately you won third prize at the recent Steelworkers Convention Art Show. What do you have planned for the future?



**Metamorphosis** - sculpture.  
Cement, string (fiber) plywood.  
34" x 36" x 45"

**SD:** My next solo exhibition, entitled *Voice of Living Beings*, will be of mosaic fine art panels and will take place during the months of March and April in Toronto. I'm very excited about this show, as the theme is very bright and cheerful, and the show gives me a chance to express some ideas I've had for a long time. I'll be presenting at least 15 new works.

Proceeds from my spring exhibition and sale will go towards the mosaic course I'll be taking this fall at a prestigious school in Ravenna, Italy. Ravenna is 2000 years old and was the centre of Byzantine civilization, and today it is known as the "Capital of Mosaic". I will learn how to use ancient mosaic-making techniques and will have a chance to use traditional materials in my work. I'll also have a chance to tour some Byzantine monuments and research topics and techniques for future art work.

For information on Susan's upcoming show, contact Susan at 416. 929. 1918 or Jamil at 416. 440 .9116.

This article is part of a *Spotlight* series that highlights the many talents, creativity and accomplishments of USWA Local 1998 members.



**Self Portrait With Landscape** - mosaic. Stained glass, plywood.  
20" x 25"

### Union Counsellors Program an important resource

Along with nine other Local 1998 members, I recently participated in the Union Counsellors program organized by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council. I am now qualified to act as a resource and help facilitate our members who may be experiencing a myriad of personal, family, legal, or financial problems ranging from divorce, family violence, housing, sexual, alcohol and substance abuse, stress, depression, and other problems.

It is important to point out that although we are called counsellors, we are not psychiatrists, psychologist, therapists, lawyers or financial experts. Our job as union counsellors is to be a strictly confidential, empathic, non-labeling, non-judgmental, sup-

portive listening and sounding board for our members and to provide and direct them to the various services available throughout the community, the university and union in assisting them to resolve their problems.

Anonymity is encouraged. For example, Susan's teenager daughter is acting out by staying out all night and is now failing high school. Rather than Susan constantly have major arguments with her daughter on the issue, Susan can simply approach any union counsellors and say that a friend is experiencing these problems. The union counsellor will provide Susan with a list of Family Services resources including a 24/7 hotline which she and her daughter can access to diffuse and resolve the issue.

Let us take another example. Frank had just had a second child. The baby is colicky and cries all night. Due to lack of sleep, Frank's work performance is

suffering, his supervisor has noticed the problem, and Frank's drinking has increased. Frank can contact any union counsellor and simply say that his friend is having a problem and again the union counsellor will provide Frank with a list of resources including the University's or Steelworkers Employee Assistance programs and various community services.

The union counselor program was a very interesting and enlightening course. The course will be offered again in June. I highly recommend it. Executive member Lee Jeffrey is working with us to set up a union counsellor network across campus.

**Jim Kennedy**

Course Attendees include: Robert Chernecky, Jean Glasgow, Lilla Hui, Jim Kennedy, Charles Kernerman, Lillian Lanca, Yuchao Ma, Samuel Pun, Tony Roberts, Jean Yang

# Labour Council launches public transit campaign

The Toronto and York Region Labour Council launched a campaign for public transit at a rally at the Ontario Federation of Labour Headquarters on Gervais Drive on Saturday, February 7, 2004.

According to John Cartwright, President of the Council, who met with the editorial board of Steel Drum on February 2, the transit campaign was chosen, in part, because public transit impacts the lives of most residents. The theme of the campaign, "*Public Transit for the Public Good*", points to the multiple benefits of public transit such as easing traffic congestion, improving services for riders, improving air quality, and delivering a better quality of life for residents.

The campaign also aimed to exert political pressure on the McGuinty government to make good on pre-election promises to restore substantial provincial funding to the TTC. The campaign for more transit funding is also part of a larger campaign to preserve and enhance public services.

Cartwright pointed out that the campaign is a logical extension of the "Enough Talk" campaign launched by the Toronto Board of Trade and the Toronto City Summit Alliance recently. The Alliance is a group of 45 civic leaders drawn from the business, labour, cultural, voluntary and public sectors. Some of its more prominent members include David Crombie (former Mayor of Toronto), Frances Lankin (former NDP MPP and current President of the United

Way), John Tory (businessman and former mayoralty candidate), and Elyse Allan (President of the Toronto Board of Trade). Cartwright and Winnie Ng are the two labour voices in the Alliance.

Cartwright believes that with the coalition of leadership from the various sectors, the various levels of government will become more responsive to the issues of the day.

Ana Sapp, Glenda Gillis, P.C. Choo



John Cartwright speaks about the campaign with *Steeldrum*. On the left is Glenda Gillis.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH



February is...

**AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

and Everyone is Welcome to Join the Steelworkers in Celebrating African Heritage!

### Guest Speaker:

Yvonne Bobb-Smith, PhD, Lecturer,  
Caribbean Studies, Ryerson University and University of Toronto

TOPIC: "*INDEPENDENCE: A VEHICLE OF RESISTANCE*"

WHEN: Thursday February 26th @ 12pm

WHERE: Sidney Smith Hall, Room 1073, 100 St. George Street

**REFRESHMENTS WITH A CARIBBEAN THEME WILL BE SERVED.**  
For more info, contact Marcella Bollers (mbollers@uswa1998.ca) or Linda Oliver (linda.oliver@utoronto.ca) Co-chairs, Human Rights Committee.

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**CALM**  
OF LABOUR MEDIA