

# STEELDRUM

USW1998 NEWSMAGAZINE

FALL 2022 | Vol.20 No.2



## Meet the New President and Vice-President of Local 1998: **John Ankenman and Tamara Vickery**

*USW Local 1998 Vice-President and Staff-Appointed Unit President Tamara Vickery (left) with USW Local 1998 President and Victoria University Unit President John Ankenman (right). Photo by Kim Walker.*

### INSIDE:

**Meet the New  
President &  
Vice-President**  
4-9

**President's Message**  
First Message 2

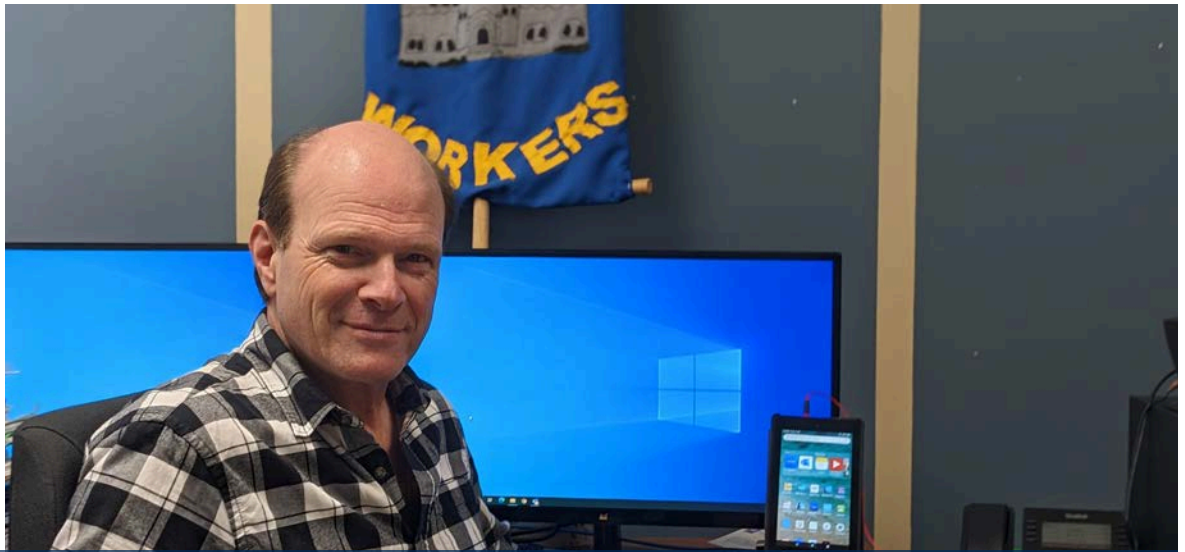
**Getting to know**  
our Servicing Staff  
Representative 10

**Cheap Eats** on and  
around Campus 14

**Unique Careers**  
at U of T Béatrice  
Lego, Campus Farm  
Coordinator 22

**2021-23 Staff**  
**Appointed**  
Collective Agreement  
Improvements 26

**New National Director**  
for Canada 41



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Addressing Problems with Our Employers' Alternative Work Arrangement Programs

Alternative work arrangement programs have been implemented for Local 1998 members in the U of T Staff Appointed, Victoria University and University of Toronto Schools units. Of those three units, the implementation of alternative work arrangement (AWA) programs in the Staff Appointed and Victoria University units have seen the most problems. In both units we have heard about how some managers have denied AWA requests without a solid rationale based on the business operations of their department. We know that some managers have set an arbitrary minimum number of days all employees in a department or faculty must work on campus each week, without considering how the duties of different jobs could reasonably lead to a different number of on-campus workdays from one job to the next.

In consultation with the International Union's Canadian Legal Department, our Staff Representative, Grievance Officers, Vice-President and I determined that a policy grievance against the University of Toronto's AWA program on a university wide level would not be viable, but grievances filed by individual members in response to a manager's denial of their AWA

request could, in certain situations, be worth pursuing. We also determined that, given the particulars of how the managers of a faculty or department implemented their AWA program, the Local could possibly file a policy grievance at the faculty or department level. The same conclusions were reached when we considered Victoria University's AWA program.

I encourage members in the Staff Appointed and Victoria University units to contact the Union about the possibility of filing an individual grievance if they think that their AWA request has been unreasonably denied. Of course, we need to be mindful of the timelines of the grievance procedures as laid out in each unit's collective agreement, but if it is too late for a grievance to be filed now, we can look at the possibility of filing a grievance if a new request is submitted when a current AWA comes up for review. The Grievance Officer who is assigned to a particular division/unit can discuss with members in that division/unit the details of their situation and how viable a grievance might be. The Grievance Officer can also consider the viability of the Local filing a policy grievance against how a department's managers implemented their AWA plan.

Please note that, if a member's manager sets a minimum number of 'work on-campus days' per

week and the member submits an AWA request that includes the number of on-campus workdays their manager set as a minimum, they will not be able to file a viable individual grievance against their manager's decision to implement the minimum days of work on campus policy. That said, there still could be the possibility of the Union filing a policy grievance.

In the last two weeks of October, we held town hall meetings that focused on the AWA programs that had been implemented by our employers. The meetings provided an opportunity for members and the Union to share information and develop our responses to the AWA programs as we look towards collective bargaining next year.

### **Building Strength for Collective Bargaining in 2023**

Negotiations for new collective agreements in our U of T Staff Appointed, U of T Casuals, Victoria University, St. Michael's College and University of Toronto Schools (UTS) units will take place in 2023 and early 2024. We will need to elect negotiating teams during the coming months and make other preparations. Unless the Ontario Conservatives extend the terms of Bill 124 or introduce new wage restraint measures, our next collective agreements will be the first since the 2017 - 2020 contracts to not fall under the legislation that prevented us from exercising our democratic right to freely bargain with our employers.

A unified and well-organized membership will be essential for us to win fair contracts in these days of high inflation. We need to work towards a state of preparedness that will allow us to adapt to new situations and challenges efficiently and with confidence. Being fully prepared for negotiations means being ready for the possibility of being forced out on strike or lock out, even if the probability of job action is low.

The best way to avoid a strike or lockout is to be prepared for the possibility of a strike or lockout. If management sees that the Union is prepared for the possibility of a strike or lockout, they will know that we will be more likely to be successful in either scenario and they will be less likely to push us in that direction. Also, if we are ever forced into job action, being fully prepared

for that worst-case scenario will increase our chances of being back to work in a shorter time than would be the case if we are scrambling to organize ourselves at the last minute.

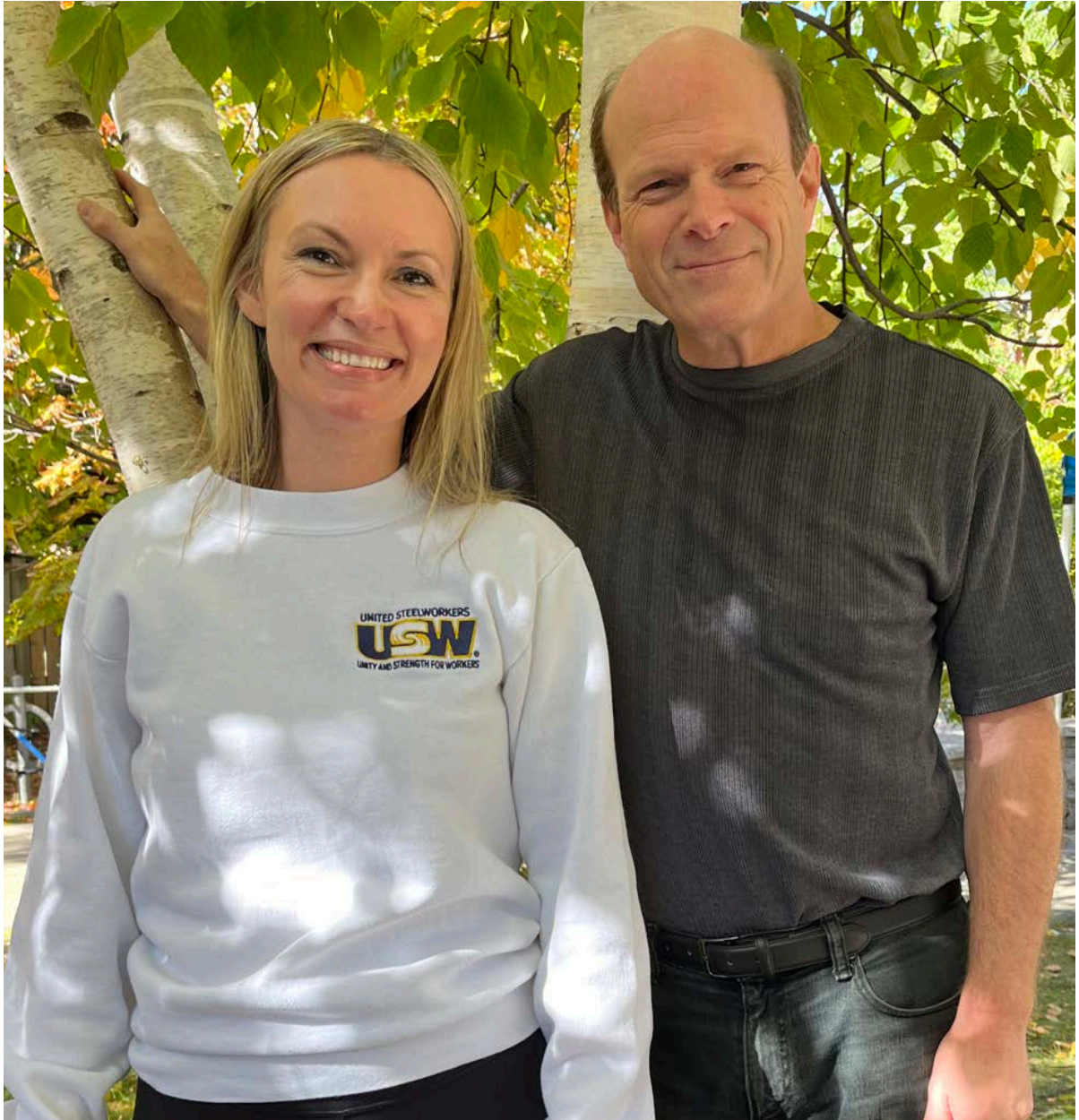
With these principles and objectives in mind, for the first time we will be forming a Strike Committee in the U of T Staff Appointed Unit and we will be looking at the possibility of doing the same in other units. The Victoria University Unit has had a Strike Committee in place for the past several rounds of bargaining, and it has proven to be effective. The members of a Strike Committee work with the Negotiating Team and the Communication Action Team in building a strong organizational framework that improves the potential for success in collective bargaining. More details of the U of T Staff Appointed Unit's Strike Committee will be announced in the coming months.

### **Local 1998 Changes in Leadership and Leadership Structure**

The spring and summer months were busy with lots of union activity. Along with the alternative work arrangement programs that were introduced in three of our units and the many typical workplace issues that needed to be tackled, we dealt with the continued development of the COVID-19 pandemic and our employers' corresponding responses and nonresponses. The Local's Executive and office staff calmly met the challenges faced due to the transition from one Local President to another, the introduction of a new leadership structure that includes a new U of T Staff Appointed Unit President position and a new release time Vice-President position, and the need to fill three Grievance Officer jobs. Their response to those challenges was in keeping with the dedication to membership service that they have consistently demonstrated in the past. Throughout each unit of our amalgamated local we benefit from the hard work of our many Stewards, Chief Stewards, Unit Secretaries, Health & Safety Representatives and Committee Co-Chairs. We have a great team that is ready to continue engaging with the Local's membership and with the broader labour movement and is eager to help build the strength of the Local as we take on new challenges.

*John Ankenman, USW 1998 President*

# Meet the New President and Vice-President of Local 1998: John Ankenman and Tamara Vickery



*USW Local 1998 Vice-President and Staff-Appointed Unit President Tamara Vickery (left) with USW Local 1998 President and Victoria University Unit President John Ankenman (right). Photo by Kim Walker.*

**M**eeet John Ankenman, our new President of Local 1998, and Tamara Vickery, our new Vice-President and President of the Staff Appointed Unit. They work closely together, leading our Local in accordance with the Constitution and Local Bylaws.

If you are even peripherally engaged with the union, you probably already know John. He has been on release serving members of this Local since the very beginning. What you may not know about John is he once had a close call with a dangerous swarm of fire ants in Borneo. He loves to observe nature and has an impressive bird-identification ability. He is passionate about Indycar racing, music, and his beloved Toronto Maple Leafs. "The only time John is not available to talk to me is when the Leafs are playing," Tamara quips. John smiles. "In between periods I'll talk." He's hoping they win the Stanley Cup at least one more time before he dies.

John started working at Victoria University in 1989 as an Assistant Manager at the Book



Photo: John Ankenman bird watching at the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Florida.

*"It sparked in me a sense that something needed to be done, that all employees needed better ways to deal with management."*

Bureau. When it merged with U of T's main bookstore, John moved into trades, working as a Maintenance Helper. "It was in that role that I really became aware of how differently hourly-paid employees were treated compared to salaried." Having been a salaried employee at the Book Bureau, and moving into an hourly-paid position in trades, the divide was eye-opening. "It sparked in me a sense that something needed to be done, that all employees needed better ways to deal with management."

Then there was a day in 1998 when the Bursar announced in a meeting that all hourly-paid employees would have half as many sick days, effective immediately. Realizing the terms of employment for hourly-paid and salaried employees could be unilaterally changed so easily, John and some of his colleagues recognized the need for a union, quickly getting plugged into the union drive happening at U of T. John was elected as Victoria University's Unit President after they certified in 1999, several months after the successful unionization drive at U of T. At the first Executive meeting of the amalgamated local in spring 2000, the inaugural President asked who was interested in working on union release. Without giving it any thought, John raised his hand. He was out on union release as a Grievance Officer by July 2000 and has been helping members through the grievance process while continuing to serve as the Vic Unit President ever since. In March 2022, when he succeeded Colleen Burke, he became the first President of the amalgamated local who wasn't from the Staff-Appointed Unit. This created the need for



Photo: Tamara Vickery and John Ankenman at a recent ice cream pop-up. Photo by Margaret Bucknam.

a separate President of the Staff-Appointed Unit, given each unit has a President representative on the Executive with unit-specific duties such as grievances. Tamara Vickery was acclaimed to this position.

Tamara was also elected as Vice-President (VP). In that role, she supports the President's responsibilities encompassing the entire Local. She brings to both positions a wealth of U of T and union experience. She started working at U of T's Accessibility Services as a casual member in February 2001. She became Staff-Appointed later that year after applying for an Information Officer position, eventually becoming a Coordinator of Test & Exam Services. In 2014 she served on the Local's bargaining committee and became a Grievance Officer in 2015. She has served on the Executive as a Guide, Trustee and Treasurer, and in 2018 completed the [USW International Leadership Scholarship Program](#).

This is the first time the VP has been a release time position, as a result of a motion passed this spring. "It became clear from Colleen's experience as President how much bigger the role had become; how much busier it was. There really was a need for greater support of the President's responsibilities," explains John. And he should know, having served as Colleen's VP while much of his time was occupied by Grievance Officer work. Over the years, the Local has not only experienced significant

*"When you know you've made a difference and had a positive impact on an individual, or group, or collectively for the entire membership... none of us would do this work if we didn't think it was meaningful."*

membership growth, but member engagement as well. "More and more, our members see themselves as union members, and as such are more likely to call upon the services of the union than ever before. Our staffing has grown to meet that need."

Trying to figure out how to divide and parse out some of the responsibilities the President would typically be responsible for and have the VP take on has been challenging as we both learn all the elements of the President's position," says Tamara. "I think John and I as incumbents work really well with each other. We are able to have open dialogue about what makes sense and who should be taking the lead in certain areas."

Having a good working relationship built on

*“The teamwork that has supported my move into this role has been tremendous, and I can’t say enough about those working on behalf of our members”*

mutual respect is key, but it doesn’t mean they always agree. “We consult every day and work together closely to ensure we are meeting the objectives as set by the Executive,” says Tamara. “We don’t always agree on everything, but we are able to move forward constructively and in the best interest of members,” collaborating on various initiatives.

When asked what a typical day in the life of the Local President and VP looks like, they both laugh. No two days are the same, which keeps things interesting. There are regular meetings, of course, but often they are being pulled in different directions, jumping into termination meetings or assisting members in crisis when no one else is available. “The one way our workday is standard is it begins early and ends late,” says John. “Multi-tasking and being able to split one’s attention and focus in multiple directions in rapid sequence is really a big part of the job.” But that doesn’t mean it’s not also immensely rewarding. “When you know you’ve made a difference and had a positive impact on an individual, or group, or collectively for the entire membership... none of us would do this work if we didn’t believe it was truly meaningful,” notes Tamara.

John agrees. Seeing tangible results for members that improve their lives is what has kept him motivated all these years. “One of the most rewarding manifestations of that is when someone I assisted directly or indirectly becomes involved with the union and becomes a steward because they have seen the value of the union. To me, that is really rewarding. There have been members I’ve worked with who have taken on union roles and that gives me a great sense of accomplishment.”

There have been many members over the years who have been inspired by John to get involved and benefited from his mentorship. Tamara was one of them.

Years ago, when she encountered serious workplace issues regarding safety, she first attempted to resolve the situation on her own. While she was familiar with the collective agreement, she didn’t know about the different services and supports the union offered. When it became clear she needed help, she reached out to the union and connected to a steward who immediately validated her concerns. “That validation, I will be forever grateful for,” she reflects. She had to go through the grievance process, and it was in that capacity that she met John as her Grievance Officer. “The role he played in supporting me and enforcing the collective agreement and other laws sparked a significant interest. I didn’t want anyone else to face what I was facing without having that

*“There have been members I’ve worked with who have taken on union roles and that gives me a great sense of accomplishment.”*

same support and representation.” Tamara got involved, taking some mediation training initially, and then was encouraged to serve in bargaining in 2014.

Outside of her union work, Tamara is a devoted

mother of two beautiful boys. She loves being outdoors, spending time with family, and describes herself as a nerd. "I love academia, I'm always taking a course. Even when I was on maternity leave with a new baby and a toddler at home, I was doing an online course... I'm always challenging myself."

Taking on both the Vice-President and President of the Staff-Appointed Unit roles fresh off a maternity leave has been full of challenges. "I think the hardest part for me is really just managing my schedule, having just come back a few months ago to a vastly different world of work." Tamara explains how when she worked as a Grievance Officer, it was pre-pandemic, and you would have time to collect your thoughts walking from one meeting to another across campus. "Now, everything is so compressed. Trying to carve out time for things that were normal in the past is difficult." With back-to-back Zoom meetings, there is little time for small talk with colleagues, breaks, or opportunities to run into members on campus between meetings.

While Tamara's challenges are unique to juggling motherhood and adapting to the post-pandemic world of work, she is relieved to have been able to start her new roles fresh, without having to continue to manage grievance files. Although she frequently steps in to represent members as needed, her grievances had been passed off when her leave started. For John, this was not the case, but like Tamara he's had to find the time to fulfill the responsibilities of multiple roles.

One of the biggest challenges navigating this new structure and settling into their new roles has been the timing of the transition. Colleen's departure as President when she was promoted to our Local's International Staff Representative and the creation of the VP as a release position coincided with a reduction of grievance officers, an office renovation, and Staff-Appointed bargaining. Although new grievance officers have now been hired, at the time of our interview, John was still juggling grievance duties with his other responsibilities as President of the Vic Unit



*Photo: Tamara Vickery with her two children, Noah and Nathan.*

and Local President where he is bargaining for other units. "Right now, the most challenging aspect is the unavoidable circumstances that have led to me splitting my attention between President and continuing grievance officer duties," he admits. This can be frustrating because the result is longer response times. But efforts have been made to ensure the right staff complement is in place to serve members promptly. Andrea Burton, Liam O'Leary and Ruxandra Pop have recently started working as Grievance Officers, and their contributions to the Local are already making a big difference.

Despite the difficulties, both have been able to cope given the hard-working, dynamic and collaborative team that supports them. This includes the larger team that works for the Local on release, such as job evaluation, grievance officers, and those in charge of communications and office administration. "The teamwork that has supported my move into this role has been tremendous, and I can't say enough about those working on behalf of our members... Without them and without our stewards, chief stewards,



and health and safety representatives, this would have been a far greater challenge," John acknowledges.

And without leaders like John and Tamara ready and willing to step up when called upon, our Local membership would not be nearly as engaged as we have become. Both can be proud of the role they have already played in membership growth, engagement, and mentorship. But they aren't done yet. In terms of what they hope to achieve in future, Tamara has been leading a significant IT infrastructure update in the office, as well as the continuation of renovations started by Colleen to make the office more conducive to the work of serving members.

They have also been working on an outreach and engagement plan to allow for meeting members in person to talk about bargaining, which will begin again in earnest in 2023. They want to build on the level of engagement we currently have, to propel us forward without losing momentum. For the next round of Staff-Appointed bargaining, we will be moving out of the so-called "moderation period" imposed by

*"The more engaged people are and the broader our base, the stronger we are and more successful we will be."*

Bill 124 that has capped our salary increases at 1% per year during a time of soaring inflation. "We need to fight hard for some monetary gains, and we need to look at strengthening contract language," Tamara notes.

Building our steward complement and getting the committees fully engaged are two other

goals. For the Staff-Appointed unit, John wants to introduce a strike committee for the first time, which would augment and work in parallel with our Communication Action Team (CAT). They've had one at Vic for a while. It's a group of people who work closely with the bargaining committee to build solidarity and prepare for a strike or lock-out. "The best way to avoid job action or lock-out is to be prepared for it," John explains. "The better prepared we are, the more the University will understand that we are strong, and they will be less likely to push us out on strike or lock-out."

"In general, my goal as President is to build upon the legacy of previous Presidents, in particular Colleen. For me as President, and the challenges I'm experiencing, having Colleen as our Staff Rep has been phenomenal. I can't emphasize enough what all these elements have meant to me and whatever success we might have." Spoken as a true leader, always giving props to the supports that hold them up and those who have paved the way before them.

I can personally attest that both John and Tamara are amazing people to work with, and you can work with them too by getting involved, either by stepping up as a steward, or expressing interest in one of the committees. You might even get nominated to serve on the bargaining committee, or the next Executive. Why? "Because it's rewarding work," advocates Tamara. "The support we provide impacts members every day. Becoming involved gives you a different sense of the important role the union plays in safeguarding the terms and conditions of our employment...if people believe that anything less than what we have isn't acceptable, they should get involved. There are so many different ways to do so. The more engaged people are and the broader our base, the stronger we are and more successful we will be."

*Kristy Bard, Committee on the Environment, Climate Change, and Sustainability*

# Getting to know our Servicing Staff Representative Colleen Burke

Interview by Mary-Marta Briones-Bird, Job Evaluation Pay Equity Coordinator



Photo: Colleen Burke in 2017 with her favourite artist to see live, Billy Bragg.

**As a Staff Representative and the former Local Union President for Local 1998, you are constantly dealing with difficult situations, from grievance handling and arbitrations to collective bargaining for an Amalgamated Local 10,000 members strong. You have written a lot of in-depth President's Reports over the years and now we thought we'd ask some more getting-to-know you questions with a few more serious questions added in as well.**

**You are a known voracious reader, what are you reading now?**

CB, I'm doing the Toronto Public Library reading challenge right now so I'm reading books for those categories. I'm currently reading 'My Brilliant Friend' by Elena Ferrante and am truthfully really not enjoying it even though it's a big global bestseller and everybody loves it. It's about a very intense friendship of two young girls in Italy in the 1950's. It's not for me. But the next book I'm going to read published in 2022 is 'When We Lost Our Heads' by Heather O'Neill which I know I will love because she's amazing, she's an author from Montreal.

## Favourite bookstore?

CB, I have a real soft spot for Doug Miller books at Bloor and Christie, a used bookstore, if they don't have what I want then Type Books in the Junction and Another Story on Roncesvalles.

## You love live music. Who's your favourite artist to see live?

CB, Favourite artist to see live is Billy Bragg. I've probably seen him maybe 15 times in the last 35 years. I have tickets to see him in October. I also really love Pink Floyd, Roger Waters, just saw him in July, postponed from 2020 until now, it was amazing.

## Favourite live music venue?

CB, Right now, Grossman's. I love going there Saturdays for the Happy Pals who play Dixieland jazz. It's my favourite spot.

## Country music, yes or no?

CB, Maybe? At the risk of offending John Ankenman, I don't know a lot of country music, I would probably like some of the older stuff. Just not something I listen to. [SD: What about Roy Orbison, Patsy Cline?] Oh definitely, I guess they're country, yeah.



Photo: Embroidery done by Colleen Burke.

## What injustice gets in your craw?

CB, Most of them, but I think that harassment, sexual harassment and bullying stand out, because they are so hard to fight, so insidious, often caused by a power imbalance. Bullying can be hard to define. The process of coming forward particularly with sexual harassment can be traumatizing because coming forward is so difficult. It's a global insidious problem. You see a lot of great activism now, in the #MeToo movement which has been amazing, things are changing a little. It definitely gets to me.

## You went to a cross stitch conference. Tell us about that.

CB, I've been embroidering since I was a kid and then in the pandemic, I joined the Toronto Guild of Stitchery and so got involved in this group. I thought I was really good at embroidery until I met these people! There was a national conference in May. I attended part and volunteered for part. I took two courses; needle painting with gold work and Indigenous beading. I have a lot of projects on the go.

## A period of time in history that you are fascinated with.

CB, Probably the Victorian era, Industrial Revolution. I'm a big fan of Charles Dickens and I've read a lot of books from that era. It's also the rise of unions and women's rights so a very interesting time. You see the development of cities, a lot of changes during this time period.

## Favourite vegetarian restaurant in Toronto that you would recommend?

CB, I really like Planta Cocina and in Kensington Market, Vegan Lotus and King's Café. I love their fake duck.

## Work life balance: possible, yes, no, worth attempting?

CB, Definitely worth attempting, very difficult. One of the ways I handle it is I'm either working or I'm not. When I'm on down time I'm not checking work emails or work texts, my phone

doesn't buzz. So, if I do have to work in the evening or Saturday, it's for a defined time. That helps so it's not constant. In the craziest days of the pandemic, it was really helpful, I'm either working or I'm not. There are always going to be peaks of work, but I think the difficulty is when you take that peak period and let that schedule become the norm.

### **What makes you proud as a union activist currently?**

CB, On a personal level I'm very proud of the University Pension Plan and our role in creating that. Seeing other Universities in the process of joining makes me very happy, it's an amazing pension plan. In general, I see a lot of exciting things happening with organizing, such as organizing Starbucks workers and the fight against Bill 124 has been difficult and in the courts but I think that's something where the labour movement has pulled together and you just see a lot of younger people organizing. There's been a lot of interest, and public opinion is changing towards unions. We're in a good moment that we can build on, strengthen our own unions and expand.

### **You have been involved in international solidarity. What have you learned from participating in international solidarity with activists from around the world?**

CB, Humility, absolute humility. I met activists in Bangladesh and known others from Colombia who can be killed, who are putting their lives at risk to do the work they do and that level of commitment and engagement, that they are doing this because they want to help people and change the world and they know their lives are at risk every day for doing it. All you can have is respect and humility in that case. You can find commonalities on some of the issues you are working on but no common ground there. The kinds of challenges we may face as union activists is tiny compared to someone who is putting their life on the line.

### **Thank you for taking the time.**

CB, Thank you.

## **Self-Funded and Unpaid Leave Comparison**

**I was inspired** to write this article when a colleague and I had a conversation regarding longer vacations and the examination of various types of leave available. For most members, there are two types of extended leave available: unpaid and self-funded. The member in question is in the Staff-Appointed unit. Staff Appointed, U of T Schools and Vic members have access to self-funded leave, whereas St. Mike's members do not.

So, what's the difference between unpaid and self-funded leave? There are some similarities,

such as the option to continue benefits and pension contributions provided the member pays both the employee and employer premiums.

However, there can be a financial advantage with the self-funded leave plan. The advantage comes from three pieces: income averaging, non-refundable tax credits and progressive income brackets. By spreading your income over a longer period, you can take advantage of non-refundable tax credits during the period of absent income. Similarly, spreading your income can push you into a lower tax bracket.

I will simplify the calculations by blending the Ontario and Canada income taxes together. This is a close approximation because the provincial tax brackets are close to that of the national brackets. For Ontario/Canada, the first \$12,000 in income is tax free. The next portion of income from \$12,001 to \$50,000 is taxed at 20%. The portion from \$50,001 to \$100,000 is taxed at approximately 30%, and any income over \$100,001 taxed at approximately 37%.

As an example, let us imagine a member has an annual salary of \$75,000 and decides to engage in a three-year self-funded leave plan, deferring one third of their salary. In the first two years of the plan, the member works as normal but only takes home \$50,000 a year, with the University setting aside \$25,000 in each of those two years. In the third year, the member goes on leave, during which time they are paid the \$50,000 of deferred salary.

In an unpaid leave arrangement, the member would receive their full salary for two years, and no salary at all during the leave year.

The tax bill for the self-funded leave is  $(\$12,000 * 0\%) + (\$50,000 - 12,000) * 20\%$  each year, which works out to \$7,600. Over three years, that would be \$22,800.

The tax bill for the unpaid leave is  $(\$12,000 * 0\%) + (\$50,000 - 12,000) * 20\% + (\$75,000 - 50,000) * 30\%$ , which is \$15,100 for each of the two years preceding the leave, with no taxes for the leave year, for a total of \$30,200 over the course of three years.

In this example, the savings of \$7,400 in taxes with the self-funded leave option could be used towards the continuation of benefits and/or pension contributions during the leave period.

**BY SPREADING YOUR INCOME OVER A LONGER PERIOD, YOU CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NON-REFUNDABLE TAX CREDITS DURING THE PERIOD OF ABSENT INCOME. SIMILARLY, SPREADING YOUR INCOME CAN PUSH YOU INTO A LOWER TAX BRACKET.**

Additional taxes are avoided by staying below the \$50,000 income bracket. It should be noted however that if a member has other income sources, they will of course have to pay taxes on it, potentially obliterating these tax savings.

Although the self-funded leave option can be better than the unpaid leave alternative, there are important considerations, such as the significant advance planning that's required. Members must apply for self-funded leave at least six months prior to the proposed commencement date of the salary deferral.

The benefits of this arrangement can also work against the member if they decide to cancel their leave at the last minute. In this case, the money put aside by the University becomes payable immediately to the member as a lump sum. Note that lump sum payments are taxed at a higher rate than regular income.

**ALTHOUGH THE SELF-FUNDED LEAVE OPTION CAN BE BETTER THAN THE UNPAID LEAVE ALTERNATIVE, THERE ARE IMPORTANT CAVEATS TO CONSIDER.**

For more information, review the *Letter of Intent: Self-Funded Leave* of your respective collective agreement. Details on unpaid leave can be found in Article 13:02 of the Staff-Appointed collective agreement.

Windsor Chan, UTM Biology

## Cheap Eats on and around Campus

**W**ith many of us back working on campus, inflation on the rise, and our wages capped at 1% per year thanks to Doug Ford's Bill 124, you may find yourself looking for ways to save some money. Of course, bringing your lunch is always the most affordable option, but sometimes pulling some leftovers together in the morning just doesn't happen. Fear not! If you work on the St. George campus, there are lots of affordable and delicious options to choose from that won't break the bank.

My go-to when I need a cheap lunch is Chinatown! A great option for those of us who work in the southwest part of the campus, Chinatown is about a 10-minute walk away. Sometimes I will select a couple options at one of the bakeries, but the best spot for a complete and filling meal is Nguyen Huong at 322 Spadina (north of Dundas, west side). There, you can get a small banh mi Vietnamese lemongrass tofu sandwich for \$4. I remember the days when you could buy a banh mi at this place for only \$1.25! Don't forget to ask for spicy.



Photo: Banh mi lemongrass tofu sandwich and dessert from Nguyen Huong costs only \$6. Photos by Kristy Bard.

For an extra \$2, I buy my favourite Chinese bakery item from the day-old rack: two sesame seed balls filled with red bean paste! Yum! This is a very fulfilling lunch for only \$6, and I haven't been able to find anything to top this amount of food at this price point.

I wanted to see what other members' favourite affordable lunch spots were, so I made a post about this in our Facebook group back in June. Anthony Castro suggested EST WEST in the food court at the OPG Building (700 University). There, you can find daily specials of different meat and rice combos for \$7.99, with generous portions. You can also get cheap sandwiches, and protein salads with unlimited options such as broccoli, cauliflower, noodles, bok choy, zucchini,

fruit, tempura, for \$9.99. Anthony suggests you can get two meals out of these protein salads, and the food is tasty, not "buffet restaurant bleh. Freshly made every day."

I decided to check out Anthony's suggestion one day and am grateful for his recommendation! I tried the fish cutlet sandwich for \$7.35. It was really good! I will be returning to this place for sure.

Another amazing neighbourhood some of us are lucky enough to work within walking distance of is Kensington Market, and I heard several suggestions from there. Nina Di Trapani is a fan of the Belgian waffles at LEKKER Sweet Corner at 237 Augusta, where you can satisfy your sweet



Photo: Fish cutlet sandwich from EST WEST. Photos by Kristy Bard.



*Bresilienne Waffle with peanuts and caramel from Lekker. Photo by Kristy Bard.*

tooth for \$12 - \$14. Audrey Fong recommends Seven Lives for \$5 fish tacos at 72 Kensington Ave, or Jumbo Empanadas at 245 Augusta for authentic Chilean cuisine. There you can get a cheese empanada for \$2.50, a veggie, beef or chicken jumbo empanada for \$6.50, or a humitas for \$6, which is mashed sweet corn, onion and basil wrapped in corn leaves and steamed to perfection.

Rasta Pasta at 61 Kensington has Caribbean cuisine, but it will be hard to avoid spending more than \$10 here. Sometimes, it's worth paying more for some jerk chicken or curried goat! Their small \$10 dishes are served with rice and peas,

jasmine rice or provisions (boiled yam, banana & dumpling) and choice of steamed vegetables or coleslaw. They also have \$10 grilled paninis, or rotis ranging from \$10 - \$17.

Audrey's last suggestion is Mi'hito Sushi Laboratory at 285 College St. (west of Spadina) for sushi burritos or poke bowls. But here, the sushi tacos are the cheapest thing on the menu at \$4 - \$5. The bowls and burritos range from \$10 - \$15.

Sid Naraine recommends Jerk King at Bathurst and Bloor, where you can get a small rice and peas and two pieces of jerk or fried chicken and coleslaw for around \$7.50. And Nina Di Trapani loves THINK.IT Pensa Italiano at 196 Borden Street at Harbord where meals range from \$10 - \$16. While both these spots might be a bit of a trek for most of us, it's still doable in 1-hour lunch break.

If you want to stay close to work, there's always the trusty Mama's best hot dogs outside Sid Smith at 100 St. George St. Always fresh and only \$4. If you happen to be putting your tuition waiver to good use and are a registered student, you can enjoy a \$5 lunch at Hart House during their monthly \$5 lunches. It's \$9 for non-students, and you must buy your tickets in advance. More info



*Photo: Watching our meals get cooked at Thai Express (left). On the right is our tofu curry and beef. Photos by Kristy Bard.*



available at <https://harthouse.ca/events/5-buck-lunch-2022-2023/>

Now enough about the St. George campus, how about at UTM and UTSC? During a visit out to UTM, Windsor Chan took me to Thai Express, where you can watch them cook your food after you order it. I ordered a tofu curry dish for \$13.19 after tax. Windsor ordered a beef dish and paid around the same price. It was a bit tricky to identify the cheapest meal at UTM, where the menus seem to place more emphasis on the calorie counts than the price. Out at UTSC, I got a black bean and rice burrito

with all the toppings for \$8.24 after tax from the MarketPlace Cafe.

What's your favourite cheap spot for lunch? Share by finding and commenting on the Facebook post on the USW1998 group page from June 2, 2022, or start your own post! We would especially love some suggestions from areas of campus not mentioned here.

*Kristy Bard, Committee on the Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability*

## "Operation Backpack" Drive

**USW Local 1998** and other USW Locals partnered up with Hamilton Steelworker Area Council (HSAC) to collaborate on their "Operation Backpack" drive on August 31, 2022.

It all began a decade ago, when HSAC launched the drive with 92 backpacks that were delivered to a few local schools in Hamilton.

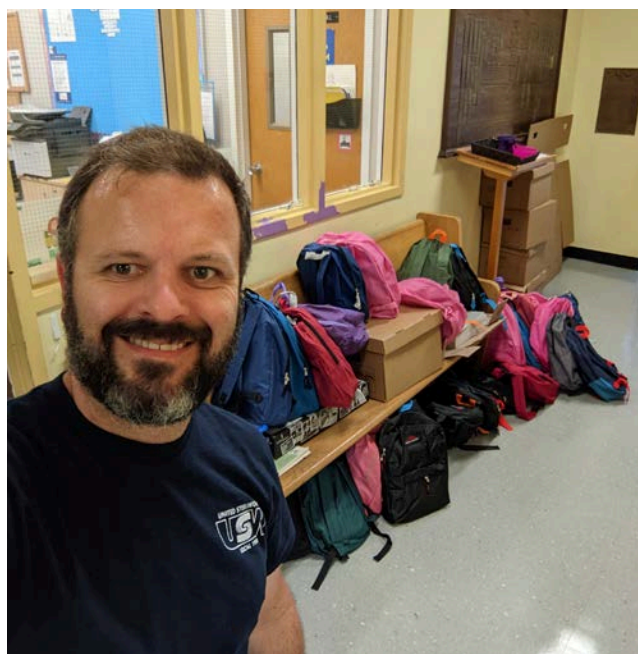
This year, HSAC raised the bar and set a target of 2,000 backpacks to be donated to schools. They successfully raised \$64,000, with USW Local 1998 donating \$1,000. Executive member and USW 1998 Administration and Communications Assistant Richard Waters volunteered to pack school supplies inside the backpacks. Many volunteers helped in packing essential back-to-school items such as notepads, pencils, pencil crayons, markers, crayons, rulers, erasers, calculators, graph paper and lunch bags for children in need.

The President of HSAC, Darren Green, noted that many families are especially feeling the pressure this year in being able to buy school supplies due to the high inflation rate.

Richard was pleased to be able to help out, delivering 21 backpacks to a school in Hamilton.

There's no doubt that many children and their families were more than happy to receive these backpacks from USW.

*Richard Waters, USW1998 Treasurer and Administration and Communications Assistant*



*Photo: Richard Waters with some of the backpacks he delivered as part of the USW's Operation Backpack drive.*

# Building International Worker Solidarity is the Lasting Legacy of Ken Neumann's Illustrious Career



Ken Neumann delivering his speech "International Unionism in a Globalized Economy" at the 2022 Sefton-Williams Memorial Lecture. Photo by Margaret Bucknam.

**Steelworkers** Canadian National Director Ken Neumann retired on March 1, 2022, after 18 years at the helm.

Neumann has always fought for workers' rights - the right to safe workplaces, the right to earn

a decent wage, and the right to be treated fairly in the workplace. His commitment to social responsibility and building international worker solidarity across borders and around the globe with other labour unions is something we can all be proud of.

"I am very proud of the work we have been able to accomplish as Steelworkers - we have improved the work lives, safety and well-being of hundreds of thousands of workers," said Neumann. "The very reason I joined the union all those years ago remains crucial to this day - the right to safe workplaces, a decent wage, freedom from discrimination and being treated with fairness and respect. Unions are as vital a tool for working people as ever before."

On April 21, 2022, Neumann was named the winner of the prestigious 2022 Sefton-Williams Award for his contributions to labour relations. The annual Sefton-Williams Memorial Lecture is hosted by the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources at Woodsworth College at the University of Toronto.

We sat down to talk to Neumann about the major accomplishments of his illustrious career.

According to Neumann, one of the major achievements of his career was in leading the fight to build international worker solidarity in an era of increasing globalization and the emergence of powerful international corporations.

The takeover of Inco by Vale in 2006 and Alcan

Aluminium by Rio Tinto in 2007-two Canadian mining companies taken over by two-rapidly anti-union multinational companies - are a case in point. The question confronting the Steelworkers union in the face of these ownership changes and the subsequent globalization of mining and steel is: what should be our response?

For Neumann and the Steelworkers, the answer is not to retreat into a narrow form of economic nationalism but to reach out to union allies around the world to build union power as a counter-balance to the growing power of multinational corporations.

Neumann was instrumental in reaching out to Unite the Union, one of the largest unions in the UK and Ireland, to form a global union called Workers Uniting. When Rio Tinto locked out 780 Steelworkers in Alma, Quebec and replaced them with scabs who were paid 50% less than the average union wage, Steelworkers fought back. When Steelworkers discovered that the International Olympic Committee had contracted with Rio Tinto to produce medals for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, the Steelworkers launched a campaign called "Off the Podium". Fifty trade unions from around the world joined the "Off the Podium" campaign. Three weeks before the start of the 2012 Olympics, Rio Tinto caved. The Steelworkers and its union allies had won the contracting out battle.

Another proud moment for Neumann was the Steelworkers' alliance with Los Mineros, the Mexican miners union. For decades, the Mexican labour movement had been dominated by corrupt unions allied with the ruling PRI government. In 2006, a disaster at the Pasta de Conchos Mine in Mexico killed 65 miners. The miners' union leader, Napoleon Gomez, called the disaster an industrial homicide. This angered the mine owners, Grupo Mexico, and within a short time, Gomez found himself facing trumped-up charges and likely imprisonment if convicted. Gomez fled Mexico and found refuge in Canada. Neumann and the Steelworkers supported Gomez in exile for 12 years. The Steelworkers pressured the Canadian

government not to deport Gomez and provide him with Canadian residency and citizenship while helping to support Los Mineros members in Mexico. Neumann also brought Gomez's case to the global union movement. In 2018, all the trumped-up charges against Gomez were dropped and he returned to a hero's welcome in Mexico. Gomez has since been elected a Senator in Mexico and Los Mineros is today one of the most successful unions in Mexico.

*Neumann was instrumental in reaching out to Unite the Union, one of the largest unions in the UK and Ireland, to form a global union called Workers Uniting.*

The third instance of international union solidarity was the work of the global union movement in Bangladesh. In 2013, a disastrous and deadly fire at a ramshackle factory located in the Rana Plaza killed over 1,100 garment workers in Bangladesh. The factory supplied retailers such as Joe Fresh, Mark's and Hudson's Bay. The majority of the workers were women and young girls who worked for a mere \$7 a day and couldn't escape the fire because the doors were locked from the outside. The loss of so many lives caused an international outcry and led to the establishment of the ground breaking Bangladesh Accord on Building and Fire Safety. A system of credible, independent factory inspections was created and the agreement also mandates improvements to safety standards for building and fire safety codes, workers' training and a complaints system. The Steelworkers have also taken on a solidarity campaign in Canada to pressure Canadian companies to pay living wages throughout their supply chains.

Another highlight of Neumann's career was the passing of the Westray Bill in March 2004. In the early morning of May 9, 1992, an explosion in



*Photo: Ken Neumann at the remains of the Rana Plaza collapse on the 1 year anniversary in 2014. Photo by Fuad Chowdhury.*

the Westray Coal Mine in Nova Scotia took the lives of 26 miners. Neumann led the fight to hold employers accountable and accidents treated as a crime scene. The Westray Bill amended the Criminal Code of Canada to hold corporations criminally accountable for causing preventable deaths and injuries to employees while on the job.

Neumann reminded us of the tragedy in Toronto on Christmas Eve, 2009 when four workers fell 13 storeys to their death when the scaffolding they were working on collapsed. Neumann says, "The time has come: if you kill a worker, you go to jail." The 'Kill a Worker and Go to Jail' campaign resulted in some convictions, but the progress on accountability was slow and not much has improved today. The manager responsible in this case was convicted and

sentenced to three-and-a-half years in jail. When it comes to prosecuting these types of cases, the government is always dragging its feet and the courts are unbelievably lenient in handing down sentences.

Neumann points out that "For every worker killed, an additional 25 people are disabled. We have to pay attention to the injustices, to ensure that every workplace is a safe workplace."

Neumann has devoted his life to ensuring that workers are front and centre of any trade reform, that they are entitled to their fair share of the economic pie and not the crumbs from trickle-down economics. "If we don't find ways to address global income inequality, and if we don't succeed in building power that will reverse the race to the bottom, sooner or later our own

living standards will fall and our own collective agreements will be undercut," he said.

Solidarity works when we stand up collectively as one strong voice instead of just one individual.

Thank you, Ken, for all that you have done for workers here at home and around the world.

*Margaret Bucknam, USW Local 1998 Outreach and Communications Coordinator and Communications Committee Co-Chair and P. C. Choo, former Editor of Steeldrum and current member of the Sefton-Williams Memorial Lecture Organizing Committee.*

*"If we don't find ways to address global income inequality, and if we don't succeed in building power that will reverse the race to the bottom, sooner or later our own living standards will fall and our own collective agreements will be undercut."*



*Photo: Residence Dons at the August 27 Welcome BBQ. Photos by Mark Austin.*

**O**n **Saturday** August 27th, the Residence Dons Unit held our annual Residence Dons Welcome BBQ. Dons from both Operations and Arts and Science came down to the steelhouse at 25 Cecil Street for their official welcome to the role and union from Local 1998. This was the only event held during training where all the residences were invited, so dons enjoyed getting to meet and make new friends as well as enjoy some great food. The event ended with a raffle for some Shoppers gift cards and was a great success!

*Jake Pereira, Residence Dons Unit President and Innis College Steward*



## Unique Careers at U of T

### Béatrice Lego, Campus Farm Coordinator

*Photo: Campus Farm Coordinator Béatrice Lego tending plants at the UTSC Farm. Photo by Brian Gettler.*

**O**n a video call in mid-June, the Campus Farm Coordinator, Béatrice Lego, takes me on a virtual tour of what she has helped build in her five years in this position. What started as six raised beds in 2018 has expanded to 47 raised beds, with an orchard of apple, pear and nut trees, berry bushes, an Indigenous garden with Three Sisters beds (beans, corn and squash), a medicine garden (white sage, tobacco and sweetgrass) and a medicine wheel garden with native plants. The 401 highway is nearby, but here on the farm at the University of Toronto Scarborough campus (UTSC), you feel like you are in the country. This isn't just a farm where university community members can learn about regenerative agriculture though. There are a diversity of projects happening on this 10-acre site, such as an open meadow serving as a research site for projects on the biological control of invasive phragmites, the study of wild bees, or research on agroecology. The farm is also just one component of UTSC's Edible Campus initiative, which includes the IC Rooftop Garden where weekly open house "Garden to Lunchbox" events occur on Mondays from 12:00pm - 2:00pm, and the edible [Valley Land Trail](#) that connects the South campus to Highland Creek Valley.

Before Béatrice was hired, this site hadn't really been used for 50 years, although U of T acquired it in 1965. What was once farmland became a quarry in the 1930s, the pits eventually infilled with groundwater. Part of the pond on which the farm now stands was backfilled with external unknown material in the 1960s, most likely gravel and silty sediment. The City of Toronto operated a landfill site from 1961-1966 adjacent to the farm and in the early 2000s, a neighbourhood grew around the site. It then served as an open space used by the surrounding community, with UTSC Grounds providing grass cutting.

When Béatrice started this term position in 2018, things started small as there was much uncertainty as to how it would develop. The spark for this project was interest from faculty in Food Studies, Environmental Studies and Environmental Science, and Human Geography to have a nearby outdoor learning and research space. Although teaching and research was what motivated the farm's establishment, initially it fell under Business, Operations and Strategic Affairs in the Office of the CAO. In recognition that Béatrice's role is not just making sure the farm is running properly, but also assisting with the academic mission, her position moved under the Office of Vice-Principal Academic & Dean in August 2022.



*Photo: Edible Campus volunteers working among the corn and sunflowers. Photo by Béatrice Lego.*

With those initial six raised beds in place, Béatrice focused on raising awareness of the farm's existence and the research and experiential learning opportunities it presented. It wasn't long before she was requesting more raised beds, adding 30 by the end of the 2020 growing season. Raised bed gardens are used due to safety concerns of growing food directly in the soil given the history of the site. For the last four years, Béatrice has overseen the building of more infrastructure and the expansion of the number of faculty and students accessing the space.

The pandemic disrupted the momentum, and things got lonely on the farm for a time. In 2021, given the safety of outdoor activities, five projects limited to specific courses were allowed. In 2022, there has been a ramping up of interest. All 47 beds are currently in use, and activities

are being added every day with more classes coming in and awareness of the farm's existence increasing.

Béatrice's main responsibilities are making sure the services and infrastructure are in place to run the farm. This includes starting seedlings in the spring, preparing the soil for planting, making gardening supplies available like tools, trellises and labels, and seed saving in the fall for the next year. Water and washrooms are also important, and one of Béatrice's future goals is the installation of an irrigation system. She is also hoping to collaborate more with community partners.

Like many jobs at U of T, hers has evolved over time, as she increasingly assists faculty through the application process if they want access to the space as part of their teaching and research.

Faculty will explain their project and purpose, and from there, Béatrice helps them determine what they want to grow, when to plant, and what should be planted where (some plants are beneficial companions like the Three Sisters, while others such as tomatoes and potatoes should not be grown near each other). This year with higher demand and the lifting of pandemic restrictions, she is also busy giving tours.

On Fridays, Béatrice oversees the work of volunteers during drop-in sessions from 10am -1pm that are open to anyone. She plans out tasks in advance, ensuring they are appropriate for novice gardeners. Over the growing season, she cares for the plants, checking up on them regularly to ensure everything is growing well. Many issues require a do-it-yourself hands-on approach, for example, putting up fencing around all the beds to protect the plants from deer, and building vertical trellises with strings for tomatoes. The absence of irrigation also presents challenges. They have adopted an Indigenous practice of gluing two terra cotta pots together, blocking one end, filling them with water, and putting them in raised beds to act as reservoirs. The water seeps through the pores of the terra cotta, keeping the soil moist.

Fall is a busy time at the farm, which is open until the end of October. They host workshops and often finish the season planting potatoes and garlic for the following year. During the winter, Béatrice keeps busy with office work, planning and consulting with faculty for the next season.

One of the things Béatrice is most proud of is that anyone can come and participate in farm activities. Students and faculty from different disciplines, such as biology, sociology, and food programs are able to connect here; it serves as a meeting place. It is also unique because U of T doesn't have an agriculture department. While campus farms are common at institutions with such programming, it has been a challenge to implement this kind of project where that culture is not ingrained.

Despite the success of the farm thus far, its continued existence in its current form is not assured. A call for consulting services on



*Photo: Some of the 47 raised beds where food is grown at the UTSC Farm. Photo by Béatrice Lego.*

the design of the farm and implementation is underway. Béatrice hopes that the future design of the farm will embrace the spirit of what it has become. She wants more people to come and use the space, respecting the ecosystem and regenerative agricultural methods practiced here. She supports the site remaining a green academic space, which is badly needed at UTSC. The farm has become a showcase for doing things like irrigation in a simple way and getting back to basic skills we should all have. At the same time, there are opportunities to further develop technological innovations while respecting the land.

Béatrice's favourite part of this job is being outdoors and seeing students and faculty interacting on the farm with a sense of peace and confidence being among these gardens instills. One of the most challenging parts is to educate and build the understanding and mindset of what it takes to run this farm. It can't be run like a regular building on campus, or as a typical landscape space. It's more complex than that, and further investments are needed, particularly for improved irrigation infrastructure.

Béatrice is well suited to meet this challenge though. With a PhD in Chemistry from l'Université de Montréal, she has spent most of her career at



*Students and faculty from different disciplines, such as biology, sociology, and food programs are able to connect here; it serves as a meeting place.*

post-secondary institutions so understands how to navigate the politics. Autonomously managing complex projects has also prepared her well for this role. She understands that if you want something done, sometimes you need to adopt a do-it-yourself mindset and stubbornly push for it. "I don't think anyone imagined the farm would be where it is now," she says. "I've been told I took this project and ran with it." She has a lot of faith in it and knows all the work she has done is worth it. The existence of this farm at UTSC is a

game changer.

As a child, her parents always had a garden, which allowed Béatrice to develop her gardening skills early on. Before starting in this role, she started the Huron-Sussex Community Garden on the St. George campus in collaboration with co-op residents, which involved extensive community management.

UTSC staff can get involved in the farm by attending a drop-in volunteer session on Fridays from 10am - 1pm during the growing season. There are also team-building opportunities, where departments can apply to do a workshop or assist with gardening projects. Departments can also apply for access to growing space, which will be reviewed by the farm committee. Béatrice encourages people to come and visit the space and volunteer to get a sense of what the farm is, and from there she can explore with you other



Photo: Volunteers having fun at the UTSC Farm. Photo by Béatrice Lego.

*"I don't think anyone imagined the farm would be where it is now."*

ways you might get involved depending on your interests.

You can learn more about the Campus Farm on [their website](#); follow them on social media [@UTSCEdibleCamp \(Twitter\)](#) and [@UTSCEdibleCampus](#) (Instagram); and check out their videos on YouTube. [This one is a short](#)

[welcome video](#) where Béatrice introduces the farm, and [this one is a longer video](#) introducing the Indigenous Garden.

*Kristy Bard, Committee for the Environment, Climate Change, and Sustainability*

## 2021-23 Staff-Appointed Collective Agreement Improvements



*Photo: The Local 1998 Staff Appointed Bargaining Committee at 6:30am after bargaining wrapped on February 19, 2022. From left to right: Richard Waters, Mary-Marta Briones-Bird, Nik Redman, Justen Bennett, Mary Lou Scott, Colleen Burke, Val Sladojevic-Sola, Issam Mikdashi and Zack Sholdra. Photo by Justen Bennett.*

**A**lthough it's only been half a year since the Staff-Appointed Unit's Collective Agreement for 2021 - 23 was ratified, we are already looking towards the next round of bargaining in 2023. Given this, it's useful to recap the advances we managed to achieve in our current contract, despite the restrictions of the Ontario PC government's *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act* (Bill 124) limiting us to a 1% increase on salary and benefits for three years.

You may have already benefited from the improvements we bargained to our Green Shield benefits. Highlights include:

### **Paramedical**

- Increased from \$800 to \$1,100 per benefit year
- Coverage expanded to include Chiropractors, Podiatrists, Dieticians, and Nutritionists

### **Vision**

- Increased the maximum coverage for prescription eyeglasses and contact lenses from \$400 to \$600 every 24 months
- Laser eye surgery for vision correction is now an eligible vision care expense to which this coverage can be applied
- Increased the maximum coverage for eye exams from \$90 to \$120 every 24 months

### **Mental Health Care**

- Increased the combined maximum for Psychological, Master of Social Work, or Psychotherapist appointments from \$2,000 to \$2700 per benefit year

### **Extended Health Benefits**

- Expanded coverage to include breast pumps with a \$500 life-time maximum
- Expanded coverage to include in vitro fertilization services, sperm wash, and non-hormonal IUDs

### **Dental**

- Increased the maximum for major restorative dental from \$1800 to \$2250 per benefit year

### **Gender Affirmation Coverage**

- Added to support members throughout their gender transition journey up to an overall lifetime maximum of \$10,000

Our benefits aren't limited just to Green Shield though. We also bargained that the Child Care Benefit now applies to "half-days" of

childcare. A "half-day" is now defined as less than 6 hours of care, which means before-and after-care for children in all-day Kindergarten is now covered. We negotiated language that clarifies Educational Assistance for Staff-Appointed members includes a maximum of \$3000 per academic year for flex-time and part-time PhD programs, addressing discrepancies in interpretation that had resulted in several grievances.

Going beyond benefits, our latest contract also includes important updates we bargained in terms of Collective Agreement language. We achieved a number of commitments from the University to work together to address ongoing concerns relating to issues such as:

- Career Development
- Employment Equity
- Gender Identity and Gender Expression
- Accommodations
- Residence Life Staff
- Crisis Identification and Referral Training

With the current pandemic and the changes it has invoked in how we work—whether temporary or permanent—we bargained language involving a commitment to "Right to Unplug" policies at the University in line with recent provincial legislation (Bill 27). This resulted in the University's new policy on [Disconnecting from Work](#) approved in May 2022.

We bargained a new letter of intent regarding civility, discrimination, and other forms of bullying and harassment. *The new Letter of Intent: Workplace Investigations – Shared Values, Preventative Efforts and Workplace Restoration* speaks to a number of issues members raised in the bargaining survey and other communications, such as commitments for better paths for early and/or informal resolution of bullying and harassment concerns. We've already seen how this language has helped us support numerous members in explorations and use of these informal paths. This letter also speaks

to the challenges members face during and after investigations, and to exploring ways to minimize the impact of the investigation process on members' mental health. It also provides the Union with a pathway to raise concerns about "hotspots" in situations where individual or group complaints may not be the only or most appropriate means of addressing issues in a department. We believe these improvements will help lead to better resolution of bullying and harassment issues for all members and we look forward to building on them in the future.

Internal hiring was another area of concern we made solid progress on in this contract. While University data shows that about 80% of USW job postings are filled by USW internal candidates, there are still issues with the overall process, and access to career growth is important to our members. Whether it's the length of time the hiring process can take, clarity on hiring priorities, or improved communications when a posting is cancelled or when a USW Staff-Appointed applicant wasn't selected, we bargained hard for improvements to internal hiring. In addition to these areas, we were successful in bargaining that:

- Your University experience is specifically listed among the qualifications to be considered by hiring managers
- The University's decision is based on "all aspects of the selection process," rather than just the interview
- USW members who are members of Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ communities; persons with disabilities; and other equity deserving groups are able to reference their lived experience in the hiring process and have it taken into consideration, as applicable to the posted position
- You are no longer required to include your manager's name when applying for a position

**WE BELIEVE THESE IMPROVEMENTS WILL HELP LEAD TO BETTER RESOLUTION OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT ISSUES FOR ALL MEMBERS AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO BUILDING ON THEM IN THE FUTURE.**

One of the biggest issues we bargained is in Article 24:05; the language on Alternative Work Arrangements (AWAs). Prior to this contract, decisions about AWAs were left solely to "the opinion of the Division of Department Head." It's incredibly difficult to grieve a decision based on someone's opinion. Significant time and effort were spent eroding the University's resistance to changing that language. In the end, we were successful and AWAs now must be considered "based on reasons of departmental operational efficiency, and service effectiveness, and the University's guidelines for alternative work arrangements" and they "shall be approved or denied in a manner that is not arbitrary, discriminatory or in bad faith." By bargaining language that bases AWA approvals on these factors, rather than a manager's opinion, we are able to more effectively grieve denials of these requests.

As with any new language, there are growing pains while involved parties stake out their positions on the details and nuances of interpreting that language. Often, this is done through the filing of grievances where the Union and the employer argue their interpretations. Those of you who've been keeping up with the newsletter and attending the General Monthly Membership meetings have heard some of



the updates on that process. We'll continue to fight for our members and provide updates as developments occur.

Other improvements include increasing the length of time for which members can request unpaid leaves of absence from 18 months to 24 months; adding language that allows for coaching letters to be removed from members' files earlier than the established 12-month term; and including time served in a position in the Casual unit immediately prior to starting in that same position as a Staff-Appointed member as part of severance calculations.

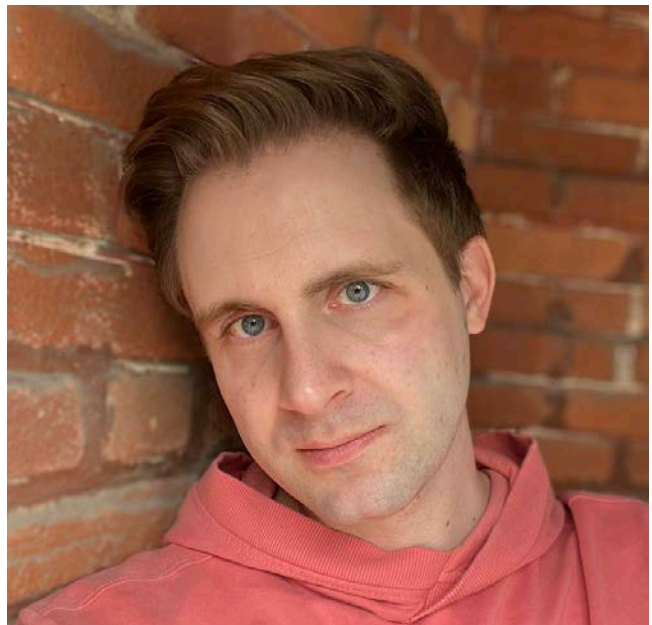
In the six months since ratification, we've already seen many members benefit from these improvements. It's important to remember that we have to continue to fight together to hold on to the rights and benefits we already have, and to continue to fight for more improvements in the future. The employer doesn't give us anything we don't work to achieve, and our best show of strength is our solidarity.

With that in mind, we will be bargaining a new contract soon when this agreement expires on June 30, 2023. Watch out in the newsletter and at the General Membership Meetings

THE EMPLOYER DOESN'T GIVE US ANYTHING WE DON'T WORK TO ACHIEVE, AND OUR BEST SHOW OF STRENGTH IS OUR SOLIDARITY.

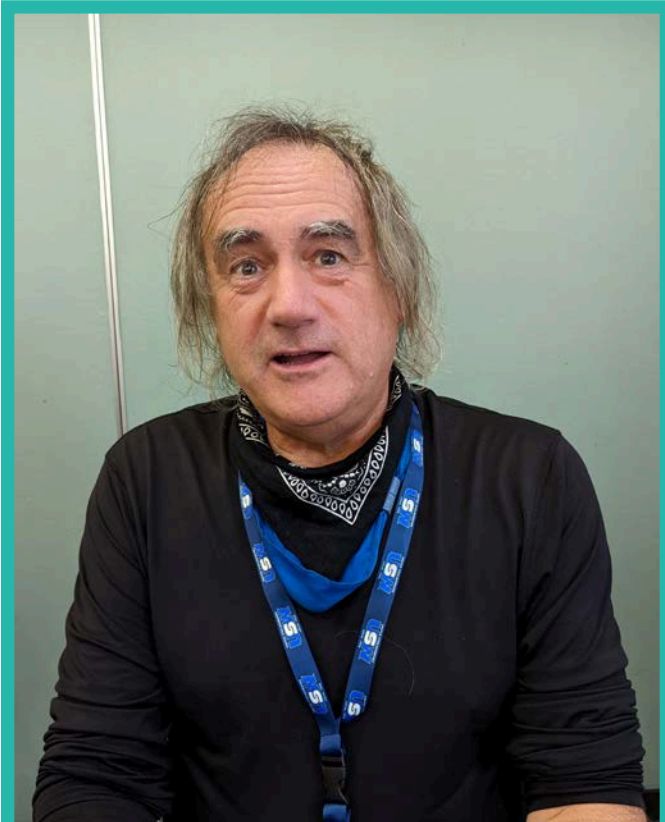
each month for updates on when nominations for the Bargaining Committee will be open. Whether you nominate someone or run for a position on the Bargaining Committee, let your Stewards know when you encounter issues in the workplace; express your concerns and priorities in the Bargaining Survey, or all of the above. We all work together to fight for our rights as workers and USW members.

*Justen Bennett, Grievance Officer*



*Photo: Justen Bennett, Grievance Officer  
Photo by Justen Bennett.*

# The Positively Enthusiastic Scott Eldridge, Casual Unit President



*Photo: Casual Unit President Scott Eldridge. Photo by Richard Waters.*

**S**cott's enthusiasm for his new role as Casual Unit President is infectious.

At the time of our interview, he had just returned from his first Steelworker International Convention in Vegas. "I also attended the International Human Rights Conference in 2019, so this was my second international conference, but this one was very different. This was huge, it was an incredible experience!" He tells me about the guest speakers, which included Joe Biden via video link, and Vice-President Kamala Harris in person, her Secret Service in tow. NDP Leader

Jagmeet Singh also attended. Scott got a chance to thank him for coming when he ran into him at the Las Vegas airport on the way home.

"I learned there's a lot more to learn, not just within Local 1998, but USW at large." Scott is fascinated by the layers he is discovering of this union. Given Scott is also Co-Chair of our local Human Rights Committee, one of the first things he did upon arriving at the Convention was make a beeline for the Civil and Human Rights booth. There, he spoke to Amanda Green-Hawkins, Director of the USW Civil & Human Rights Department about being a guest speaker at a Local 1998 Human Rights Committee event.

**"BEING A CASUAL MEMBER AT THIS LOCAL IS COMPLEX AND MISUNDERSTOOD."**

Although Scott has been a casual member for 20 years working as a Standardized Patient in the Faculty of Medicine, his involvement in the union only started in March 2019. Like so many who go on to become union activists, his first contact with the union was because he had a problem and sought assistance. "John was the first person I met," he recalls, referring to current USW 1998 President and then Grievance Officer John Ankenman. The experience left him feeling respected and heard. "They listened and I liked that. Every meeting was cordial, and I was impressed by that." He started reading

the e-newsletters, and when he saw the call for members to attend the International Human Rights Conference in Minneapolis in July 2019, he jumped at the chance. After that he was hooked. In November 2019, he was acclaimed to serve on the casual bargaining committee and was acclaimed as Casual Unit President in January 2022.

“If I hadn’t been on bargaining, I probably wouldn’t have jumped into this position,” he admits. But after learning a lot from that experience and working closely with former President Colleen Burke and former Staff Representative Mary Lou Scott, he became interested when the role became vacant. “I enjoyed watching the way Mary Lou negotiated with Labour Relations. I liked the dynamics of that, it was like a big chess game.”

Since becoming Casual Unit President, Scott has been focused on member engagement, attending orientation sessions with new casual members. But getting casual members involved is no easy task. While Scott has been enjoying the challenge, he acknowledges it’s hard work. Some casuals only work over the summer, while others like him can spend decades working for the university. Motivating even long-term casual employees to attend a meeting or to get involved in a committee can still be an uphill battle. At the same time, learning a lot about the casual unit he didn’t know previously has been rewarding.

“When I became President, I didn’t know what to expect. I had a plan of what I wanted to do but was hit with the harsh reality of what’s involved. It’s a lot more work than I had anticipated, but it’s rewarding meeting all these casual members.” He’s particularly enjoyed engaging with students working Convocation, some of whom he’s kept in touch with. He loves seeing young members who don’t know much about the union attend their first meeting. “Everything starts small, and you build

from it.” The positive energy that flows from Scott is a perfect match for the perennial problem of sustaining casual engagement with the union.

“Being a casual member in this local is complex and misunderstood,” Scott tells me. As an example, he explains how casual members are no longer considered employees by the university if they don’t work for 13 weeks. Yet the union will continue to consider a casual a member for two years after their last gig. There is also the difficult situation of several casuals being “deactivated” due to their vaccination status, and confusion around what exactly that means. Scott has spent a lot of time helping members navigate this difficult situation.

He has Post-it notes on his wall detailing what he wants to negotiate in the next round of casual bargaining. “There are so many things I think we can work towards that are doable in the next round.” He is looking forward to meeting with more casual members and the next casual unit bargaining committee to learn more about what members want to see in the next contract. Scott also wants to see new casual members on the bargaining committee, so they can gain the same insight and inspiration he did from the experience. He notes that more casuals getting involved will make for a stronger local and increase awareness of the important and unique roles casuals play at the university. He cites the valuable contributions of standardized patients such as himself.

“I’m helping shape the future of medicine and pharmacy, and that will make the world better.” Skilled actors, standardized patients work with pharmacists, medical students and doctors, playing the role of patients during exams to ensure tomorrow’s medical practitioners are well-trained. He is proud to be part of a world class institution that is preparing tomorrow’s doctors and pharmacists society so badly needs.

*“Everything starts small, and you build from it.”*

Another interesting fact about Scott: [he directed the Small Town Bringdown Tragically Hip music video](#), which had heavy rotation on MTV and Much Music when it came out (it can be viewed on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgMFOu\\_4mfE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgMFOu_4mfE).) During a lull in shooting in Kingston, Gord Downie invited Scott into his parents' home for coffee. "We talked about music, the arts, life - everything!" A year later, Scott ran into Gord on the Toronto

subway. Gord told him he loved the energy of the video he directed. I'm loving the energy Scott is now infusing into this local. It's hard not to feel motivated to action hearing him speak so passionately about casual and human rights issues.

*Kristy Bard, Committee for the Environment, Climate Change & Sustainability*

# HUMAN RIGHTS Committee Report

**I recently became** the USW Local 1998 Human Rights Committee Co-Chair on invitation from Scott Eldridge, Casual Unit President, and the other Co-Chair of the Human Rights Committee. I met Scott working as a fellow standardized patient but was able to really get to know him by virtue of working together for many months at the McCaul Street Vaccination Clinic. Volunteering with the Human Rights Committee appealed to me for a variety of reasons. I was raised by working class parents in the United States, one of whom was a Machinist's Union factory worker and the other a cook. They both instilled in me the value of treating people fairly and equally. My later education in life emphasized being non-judgmental in dealing with others. As a member of a minority group (gay male) I operated a resource centre for LGBTQ2S+ people in an ultra-Conservative state, where I became acutely aware of the pervasiveness of discrimination against people who were not in the majority population.

As Co-Chair of the Human Rights Committee, I hope to facilitate the expansion of knowledge of committee members about relevant human rights issues, both within and outside of the union. I also



Photo: Gary Horenkamp, new Co-Chair of the Human Rights Committee.

hope to gain more knowledge myself of how our union can benefit the greater society in meeting societal human rights challenges.

I joined the United States Air Force in 1972, which at the time, was moving in the direction of ensuring that members of all races were fairly and equally treated. As I finished my career, off duty I completed a Master's degree in Counseling and Human Resource Development. After retirement from the Air Force, I joined the University of Nebraska Medical Center as a standardized patient (SP) for their Medical School and allied health professions in 1992. I met my life partner in 1998 and as we moved to further his career, I worked as an SP in Houston. I've been an SP here at U of T since 2019, and worked for several rounds at U of T COVID-19 vaccine clinics.

*Gary Horenkamp, Standardized Patient Program*





Photo: Steel Pride Committee Co-Chairs Dinah Thorpe and Emma Buajitti at the Queer Pong table. Photo by Kristy Bard.

Photo: From left to right USW1998 member Laura Toth, USW1998 Staff Representative Colleen Burke, and Steel Pride Committee Co-Chair Dinah Thorpe at the June 9 Pride Party. Photo by Kristy Bard.

# STEEL PRIDE

## Committee Report

**O**n June 9, the Steel Pride Committee hosted a Pride Party, outside at the Steelworkers Hall. There was pizza and party games, and yes, there was Queer Pong! Even a little bit of rain did not dampen our spirits. Thanks so much to everyone who made it out-it was so lovely to see everyone in person after so long. Stay tuned for plans for Steel Pride Solstice in December!

*Dinah Thorpe, Dalla Lana School of Public Health*

# WOMEN of STEEL

## Committee Report

**S**ince May 2021, I have enjoyed leading the Local's Women of Steel Committee as the Co-Chair. We have organized events and activities for the USW members to meet, collaborate and share information to help, support, and exchange with other women at the University of Toronto.

On March 3, 2022, in celebration of Women's Day, we organized a virtual lunch and learn event on Zoom called "Menopause, Work, & Our Union". Going through menopause is like going through puberty: it's a natural part of life for people. But we suffer from too little information and too much stigma, especially when it comes to how our work lives can be affected by menopause. The event was extremely well attended by 44 members! In the future, I would like to see menopause be openly discussed with managers, so members experiencing it can get the support they need. We hope this event served as the first step in that direction.

Over Fall 2022, we have also been discussing holding conversations with women about health tips during the pandemic and into the future. Topics could include how to manage stress, the benefits of nature in our workplace, self-community and staying connected, and possibly guided gratitude meditations for self-care, mindfulness, and coping strategies. We also want to plan a donation drive for Dress for Success.



*Photo: Nina Di Trapani, Women of Steel Co-Chair*

We are continuing to do wonderful work with the Women of Steel Committee and hope you will join us!

Below is a description of our March 3 event, and below you will find resources that were shared with attendees afterwards.

Lunch and Learn: "Menopause, Work & Our Union"

Date held: On March 3, 2022, at 12:00 - 1:00 pm

But we suffer from too little information and too much stigma, especially when it comes to how our work lives can be affected by menopause. The purpose of this lunch-and-learn was to learn more about how our union could offer support. Featuring Sylvia Boyce, USW District 6 Health & Safety Coordinator and Adriane Paavo, head of the USW National Education & Equality department.



Photo Adriane Paavo, USW  
National Office Education & Equality  
Department Leader and one of the  
speakers at our March 3 event.

The goals that we achieved were:

- Started an ongoing conversation among U of T members about menopause: what it is, what typical symptoms are, what resources and tips are available to deal with it
- Legitimized our experiences and our right to ask for help
- Learned how to seek support from our union when it affects our working lives

*Nina Di Trapani, USW Local 1998 Women of Steel Co-Chair and Office Coordinator*

## **Resources on Menopause, Perimenopause, and Menstruation**

### **USW materials for Raising the Bar on Women's Health and Safety**

- <http://usw.ca/raiseTHEbar> (including the Action Guide which discusses menopause—pages 55-57—and provides the Menopause Hazard Assessment Checklist—pages 78-79)

### **News articles** (from the UK, where the menopause discussion is much further advanced):

- [Menopause study to uncover impact on senior women in the City | Menopause | The Guardian](#)
- [A third of women hide menopause symptoms at work - report | Menopause | The Guardian](#)
- [Mission menopause: 'My hormones went off a cliff - and I'm not going to be ashamed' | Menopause | The Guardian](#)
- [Menopause at centre of increasing number of UK employment tribunals | UK news | The Guardian](#)

### **Videos**

- [Jen Gunter: What really happens to your body during menopause | TED Talk](#) (5:02; can turn on French subtitles, among other languages)
- For a bit of a laugh: [Perimenopause | Baroness von Sketch Show - YouTube](#) (2:23)
- To look at the whole menstruation spectrum: [Jen Gunter: Why can't we talk about periods? | TED Talk.](#) (11:30) as well as [TED-Ed: Why do women have periods? | TED Talk](#) (4:30)

### **Books**

- *The Menopause Manifesto: Own Your Health with Facts and Feminism*, Dr. Jen Gunter, Random House Canada, 2021.

### **Resources for Trans Women**

- "Menopause for the Rest of Us," by Joanne Mason, in *What Fresh Hell Is This? Perimenopause, Menopause, Other Indignities, and You*, by Heather Corinna, Hatchette Books, 2021.

### **Web sites and e-newsletters**

- [The Centre for Menstrual Cycle and Ovulation Research | \(cemcor.ca\)](#)
- [The Vajenda | Dr. Jen Gunter | Substack](#)
- Our Bodies Ourselves section on menopause and perimenopause [Menopause \(ourbodiesourselves.org\)](#)

Sylvia Boyce, USW District 6 Health & Safety Coordinator, [sboyce@usw.ca](mailto:sboyce@usw.ca)

Adriane Paavo, USW National Education & Equality Department Head, [apaavo@usw.ca](mailto:apaavo@usw.ca)

# Forging Steel: Engaging the Next Generation of Steelworkers

**A**s a member of the Casual Unit, the University student body, as well as Generation Z, I sometimes feel like there are too many things to care about at once. From coursework to the climate crisis, I can feel overwhelmed, dividing my time, energy, and emotional labour between so many important pursuits. Perhaps you're a young Steelworker in a similar situation, and this description resonates with you. Perhaps you're a more senior member, and you've noticed this strain among your newer peers. In any case, the question remains: many young members of USW1998 want to know why they should care about the union.

The answer, quite simply, is that young workers aren't getting their fair share – and the only way we can advocate for ourselves is to organise.

Young workers today [earn 20% less on average](#) than the Baby Boomers did at the same age. Average student debt at graduation today sits at [\\$28,000, up roughly 40% since 2000](#). COVID-19 hit early career workers the hardest, with [youth unemployment levels jumping roughly 100% more](#) than their more mature peers from 2019 to 2020.



The numbers can paint a grim picture, but there is always hope in solidarity. Throughout the 2000s, young workers saw their wages grow faster than their peers, which Statistics Canada attributed to better union retention rates

among youth. In 2021, StatsCan also found that employees with a collective bargaining agreement earned roughly 16% more on average than their peers without coverage. Closer to home, Local 1998 earned our Staff-Appointed membership significant increases in benefits and coverage earlier this year, despite the Ford Government hampering public sector compensation with Bill 124.

*There have been incredible victories in youth unionisation recently, ranging from the Starbucks unions south of the border to the integration of Residence Dons into our Local late last year.*

Although the potential is evident, youth union coverage and participation levels still remain comparatively low overall. There have been incredible victories in youth unionisation recently, ranging from the Starbucks unions south of the border to the integration of Residence Dons into our Local late last year. Still, because of factors like the 'worthy cause burnout' I described above, younger members can still need a bit of extra encouragement to best harness the power of solidarity.

So, what can we do to better energise the next generation of Steelworkers? If you're a more experienced member, consider formal or informal mentorship. The Institute for Women's Policy Research and the Berger-Marks Foundation offers a free guide book on encouraging future union

leaders, which the USW Canadian National Office publishes on [their website](#). Even a casual chat with peers about your experience with the Local would do a lot to solidify the idea that USW1998 is here to make a positive difference. My advice for young members like myself is broadly similar – chat with your friends and co-workers about what we do and who we are. The Local is local, and it's easiest to recognize that when the context is coming from a familiar face.

It's an exciting time to be a young Steelworker, and I'm grateful that USW1998 is here to support members like me. We're currently revitalising the NextGen Committee under the leadership of co-chairs Elysha Daya and Zack Sholdra, which will be dedicated to the issues faced by members ages 35 and under. Over the coming months, it will hopefully become a vibrant community for the amazing young workers across the Local. Shoot us a message at [nextgen@usw1998.ca](mailto:nextgen@usw1998.ca), and I hope to see you at one of our events very soon!

*Spencer Ki, Student Life; NextGen Event & Outreach Coordinator*



*Photo: The beautiful landscape at Green Gables in PEI (left) and Richard in a lobster trap in Lunenburg (right). Photos by Richard Waters.*

**S**tunning scenery, fresh seafood, historic lighthouses, and red sandy beaches is what we were looking forward to when we originally planned our trip out east in winter 2019. Two years later, in June 2022, we finally drove out to the east coast of Canada.

The idea all started when I encouraged my retired parents to do the road trip out east in the summer of 2019. They planned the trip within two days and off they went on a 14-day road trip. During their journey, they sent pictures and shared highlights which clearly showed that my parents were enjoying their Canadian road trip to the Atlantic provinces of Canada. Right there and then I knew it was “the” road trip that my partner and I wanted to take in the summer of 2020.

Unfortunately, in March 2020 circumstances beyond our control would force us to pause our travel plans—the COVID-19 pandemic which seemed to bring the world to a virtual standstill.

Photo: Relaxing after a long day of walking in Old Québec City at La Cour arrière du Festibière. Photo by Richard Waters.



By 2022, most restrictions were being eased across the country. My partner and I agreed that this summer we would take this trip, no matter what happened. Despite high fuel costs, we decided to proceed with our Canadian road trip to the Atlantic provinces of Canada - FINALLY.

We left our home on June 30th at 5:00am to try and avoid the GTA rush hour and headed to our first stop, Old Québec City. We made a brief stop in Drummondville for coffee and croissants. We enjoyed a stroll in the town and checked out Rivière-Saint-François while we stretched our legs, before getting back on the road for another two hours before arriving in Old Québec City.

Once there, we were in awe of the beauty Old Québec City has to offer and brought back memories of our visit in 2018. We often reminisce about our time in Québec City because it represents history and is rich in culture with a European feel to it without having to fly overseas. We stayed at Auberge du Trésor, which is right across from Le Château Frontenac,

within walking distance to major attractions such as Quartier Petit Champlain, Place Royale, Old Port, Terrasse Dufferin, Québec City's Walls, and the Citadelle de Québec. After walking to the many attractions in town, we stumbled across a bar in the Old Port called "La Cour arrière du Festibière". It's a bar where you can get your feet wet in a pool while sitting in a lounge chair and enjoying a drink. We thought it was a great place to relax after walking nearly 30,000 steps in one day!

Our next stop was Fredericton, New Brunswick and during our drive my partner noticed on her phone that we were close to Hartland Covered Bridge. It is the world's longest covered bridge, at almost 400 metres long. It crosses the St. John River from Hartland to Somerville and a one-way traffic system is in place where each side has to wait their turn to drive across. Fredericton was a rest stop for us before we continued to Nova Scotia. At 6:00am we drove to Saint John, New Brunswick and took the ferry across at the Bay of Fundy to Digby, Nova Scotia, a nice 2.5-hour restful break from driving.

When we arrived in Digby the scenery was stunning. As we drove off the port of Digby, we parked our car as we saw the portside artisan community vendors selling a variety of homemade baked goods, crafts, and arts.

Leaving Digby, we decided to drive west in Nova Scotia to Yarmouth for lunch and begin our scenic route enjoying the oceanside view and the greenery that Nova Scotia has to offer. In Yarmouth we had lunch at Rudder's restaurant enjoying delicious, freshly made lobster rolls. While we were enjoying our lunch, and as we are coffee enthusiasts our waiter suggested that we try a craft coffee/tea hybrid called "Dirty Hippy" at a local coffee shop called Sip. The beverage consists of a chai latte mixed with 2 shots of espresso. It was a delicious treat to finish off our yummy lunch!

We left Yarmouth and began our first scenic drive along the Acadian Shore. Nova Scotia's southwestern coast has the most beautiful coastal scenery, an abundance of fresh seafood, and a lively blend of Acadian and English culture.

*The surrounding shore was foggy, but it was alluring, a bit menacing and mysterious – yet inviting.*

The second half of the scenic drive consisted of many vintage lighthouses as we arrived at the old town of Lunenburg. The town has 70% of the original colonial buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries which are vibrant and colorful, overlooking the waterfront with many fishing boats. The town offers a variety of local distilleries, shops, artisans, and amazing restaurants.

After we enjoyed our visit to Lunenburg, we continued to Peggy's Cove on the shores of the scenic St. Margaret's Bay. The surrounding shore was foggy, but it was alluring, a bit menacing and mysterious - yet inviting.

Leaving Peggy's Cove, we continued our drive to Halifax, which was our final stop to take a break from driving for three days. We walked

in downtown Halifax to the Public Gardens, a 16-acre Victorian city garden which consists of a large variety of plants, flowers and trees and many benches to enjoy your cup of coffee while overlooking the park's greenery. We visited the hilltop Citadel, a historic national site, the 19th-century British fort which dominates the city's view. We took a stroll to the harbourfront and saw many tugboats, vintage, and modern sailboats, and took the water passenger ferry service across to Dartmouth where we explored the downtown core of Dartmouth. The best part of the harbourfront was sitting on lounge chairs and enjoying the view. Further up is Pier 21 which was the gateway to Canada for immigrants arriving by boat across the Atlantic between 1928 and 1971. It was an emotional visit for me as my mother arrived in Canada in October 1955. I had the opportunity to look up the immigration history of when my grandparents, my mother and my uncle first arrived in Canada.

Our final stop was to the east coast of Prince Edward Island. We drove up to Caribou, Nova Scotia to take the ferry across to Wood Islands, PEI. We booked a unique stay on Airbnb in Georgetown, consisting of a tent overlooking

*Photo: Richard and his partner Renata at Peggy's Cove (left) and Richard digging for clams in Georgetown (right).*



the beach and the Georgetown harbour. It was a “glamping” experience. For those who do not know, glamping means glamorous camping that offers similar comforts to being at home, a full-sized made-up bed, functioning hot shower, bathroom, and kitchen amenities.

At our Airbnb we quickly discovered that there were clams at our red sandy beach. We were able to dig out fresh clams from the beach for our dinner. It was a rather unique experience for us as we are clearly city slickers. Nonetheless, boiling the clams, adding butter and celery made it quite tasty! Our first experience in digging, cooking, and enjoying ocean fresh clam!

We explored the historical sites for Anne of Green Gables, and it was a special moment for my partner to see where the writer Lucy Montgomery’s novel came to life. Many of the sites are preserved and gave us the feeling of travelling back to the early 1900s, which certainly gave us an appreciation for what we have in 2022. After we explored the Green Gables historical site, we visited the Cavendish National Park with its high sand dunes, red rock structures, and beautiful white sand beach.

One of highlights of my parents’ trip was their visit to the [New Glasgow Lobster Suppers place](#). They still rave about the dinner they had there. As it was close by, near Cavendish region, we decided to have dinner there as well. It was \$40 per person and included one pound of lobster, a bucket of mussels, PEI potato salad, garden salad, clam chowder soup, dessert, and coffee. The dinner experience was beyond splendid.

On the day we decided to return home, it was also the day of the Canada-wide Rogers outage. At first, we thought that we were driving through a poor reception area until we quickly learned when arriving at the Confederation Bridge toll booth that there was a Canada-wide outage, and many places were not accepting point-of-sale card transactions. The toll booth was cash

*It was a rather unique experience for us as we are clearly city slickers.*



*Photo: Richard enjoying lobster at New Glasgow Lobster Suppers. Photo by Richard Waters.*

only! Fortunately, my partner came prepared as she had brought cash, and we were able to pay our way home. Moral of the story: always bring cash in case of a Rogers crash!

During our journey home, we saw a sign on the highway for “Magnetic Hill” and our interest piqued that we make a brief stop. We had no idea what it was until my partner googled it. It’s a hill outside of Moncton, New Brunswick. You drive the car to the bottom of the hill, put your car in neutral and the car rolls backwards - UPHILL! It was so mind-boggling that we had to repeat it a few times to ensure that we were still rolling uphill from the bottom of the hill.

We enjoyed the slower pace of life in the Atlantic provinces where we were able to unwind from a busy, hectic lifestyle. We drove a total of 4,359 km and while the trip was long overdue, the wait was well worth it. Would we do it again? In a heartbeat, yes, with a change to drive further east and cross over to Newfoundland!

*Richard Waters, USW1998 Treasurer and Administration and Communications Assistant*



# Our new National Director for Canada



*Photo: Marty Warren addresses delegates at the USW International's Constitutional Convention held August 8-11, 2022 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Photo by USW International Convention.*

**Marty Warren** was elected USW National Director for Canada in the fall of 2021 and took office in March 2022. He succeeded Ken Neumann, who retired after 18 years in the role. Prior to his election as National Director, Warren served as USW District 6 Director for nine years.

Warren says he's had to make some "big adjustments" in his new job, one of which is to come to grips with how distant one can feel from the grassroots, being among the 'weeds' as he calls it. He explains the National Office's "prime job is to create supports for staff and members" rather than be involved in the everyday workings of locals.

During his term, Warren plans to continue Neumann's work of enhancing the union's global footprint. "Global capital can switch locations around the world so easily, so we need to strengthen global alliances to meet that challenge," says Warren.

Warren says members should also see the National Office do more work around a just transition to a green economy. "As a union, we have a role to play in meeting the challenge of climate change. We need to start bargaining investment in a green economy."

Warren stresses the move to a green economy "doesn't mean the end of steel production or mining. In North America, we need to take control of our move to a green economy. If we don't start to mine our precious metals, soon China will be the one shipping us precious metals." And, Warren is adamant that nuclear power has a role to play in going green. "Nuclear power has to be one of the pillars in growing a green economy." Having said that, Warren sees this transition as "an opportunity to grow our membership" in the new industries of a green economy, and thus a continued diversification and move beyond the traditional steel mills and mines.

While servicing the more than 225,000 USW members in Canada occupies much of his time, Warren says it's important for him and all trade union members to be politically active beyond the union itself.

The son of an ironworker, Warren has been a labour activist for three decades, starting in 1984 as a member of the United Rubber Workers while working as a tire builder at the BFGoodrich Tire plant in his hometown of Kitchener, Ontario.

Warren says the re-election of Doug Ford and the PC government in Ontario in May broke his heart. "We've got to do more to impress upon our members that politics matter, that elections matter." With Ford gaining a second term as Premier, Warren expects more turbulent times ahead, with health care "falling apart," high inflation and wage caps on public sector workers in Ontario still in effect.

[On the USW Canadian National Director's website](#), Warren sets out plainly the challenge ahead for the labour movement.

"Canadian families are facing some of the toughest economic and social challenges we have seen in generations. Our working and living standards are under constant attack by corporations and right-wing politicians who do

their bidding," Warren says.

"Our union, and the labour movement, must fight back like never before. We will cultivate an environment that develops our next generation of activists and leaders. We will engage and empower our members, their families and all Canadians to be politically active."

On a lighter note, Warren is really into his pet cat, Sir Stanley Warren. So much so that he maintains an [Instagram account](#) for Stanley. See the sidebar with Warren's short biography for the link.

*Nick Marchese, Kinesiology & Physical Education (KPE)*

## About Marty

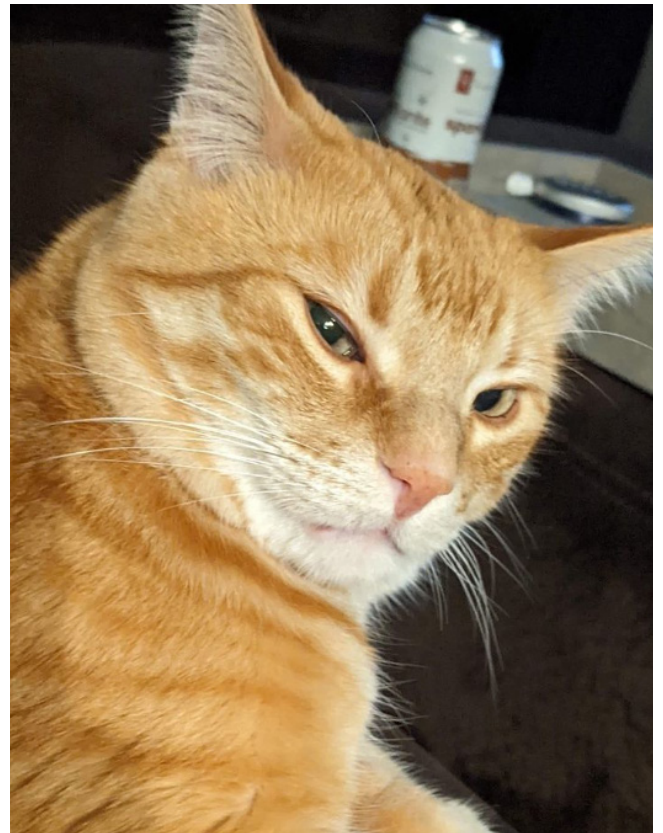
Born in 1963 (turned 59 in September). Hometown is Kitchener, but was actually born in Barrie. On the birth certificate, his full name is Orville Martin Warren. ("But, I've been called Marty all my life.")

Two children: a son (aged 29) and a daughter (aged 27).

Favourite sport: hockey. A big Leafs fan. ("Toronto is the only hockey team.")

He maintains an [Instagram page for his pet cat Stanley](#) ("Yes, his name is Sir Stanley Warren, and he's full of personality.") The Instagram page had 128 followers as of August 23, 2022.

You can connect with Marty Warren via his Twitter account (@MartyWarrenUSW).



*Photo: Marty's cat Sir Stanley Warren does not approve of the re-election of Doug Ford.*



## OBITUARY

### RICHARD "MARK" BURGESS

July 23rd, 1965 – October 22nd, 2022

**It is with great sadness** that we announce the passing away of one of our brothers, a USW1998 LOCAL Casual Unit member, RICHARD "MARK" BURGESS at the age of 57.

"Mark" was a Standardized Patient in the Standardized Patient Program, who also worked extensively at the McCaul Street Vaccination Clinic during the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

He was a larger-than-life character and an incredible individual with a wonderful sense of humour.

Richard "Mark" Burgess will be missed by everyone who knew him.

# After 2.5 years of hiatus It's good to see you again!



**STEELDRUM**  
NEWSMAGAZINE  
is published by  
USW Local 1998  
at the University of Toronto.

**Communications Committee**

Kristy Bard (Co-Chair & Editor), Margaret Bucknam (Co-Chair), Mary-Marta Briones-Bird, Liesl Joson, Richard Waters, Mark Austin, Nina Di Trapani, Nick Marchese

**Production:** Richard Waters

STEELDRUM is a member of the United Steelworkers Press Association & the Canadian Association of Labour Media.

[usw1998.ca](http://usw1998.ca) | [info@usw1998.ca](mailto:info@usw1998.ca) | 416.506.9090