



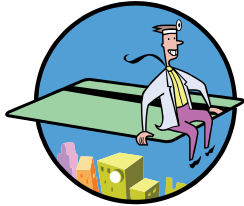
USW
Local 4120

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Table Talk

While the Local is in negotiations the sub-title of the newsletter will be "Table Talk" as we keep you informed with bargaining updates

Membership Cards



If you do not have a membership card please let us know. You need a card to attend General Membership Meetings and any Special Membership Meetings, that may come up during this negotiating year.

Pension Town Hall

On April 13, a large turn out of Local 4120 members attended a meeting on pensions where Alex McKinnon from the USW National Office presented information on our pension plan.



"Many Local 4120 members keenly concerned that the University has not managed our pension fund with appropriate fiduciary prudence, met to discuss the implications and alternative options for our pension plan"

Kathleen Vanessa Hyland

1st Bargaining Meeting

Your Bargaining Committee will meet with the University Administration on the 24th of May.

Contract Action Team (CAT)

There is room for more members on our CAT team.



If you are interested in joining please contact the office at x58911 or email: admin@uswa4120.ca

Stewards & CAT Team Meeting

On the 19th of April the Stewards along with members of the CAT team met to discuss issues regarding upcoming negotiations. Guest speakers from the USW National Office, Brad James, Head of Organizing and Omero Landi, Staff Representative led discussions on bargaining strategies and mobilizing members. Brad and Omero both have many years experience in working within the education sector of the United Steelworkers and have been involved in organizing at the University of Guelph, University of Toronto and Queen's University.

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President's Report

University Pensions

As you are likely aware, right now, our pension is a big issue. You may have been at meetings where the employer presented their budget and talked about the state of the pension and their application for solvency relief.

Many employers, in all sectors of the economy, have experienced "solvency deficits" in their pension plans. The University sector is no different. Many employers in the province, and across the country, simply complied with legislation and started to make additional payments to the pensions over a five year period to help insure that workers pensions are secure. In many cases, employers have been able to extend this to a ten year period.

However, in Ontario, after intense lobbying by the employer group, the Council of Universities, the government announced proposals specific to the University sector that allows them to fund their shortfalls over a period of up to 14 years, however, only on the condition that the employers attack your pension benefits. This is not an acceptable solution for our members or for your Union!

Our pension benefits have been an important part of our compensation that your Union has negotiated on your behalf. At the very least, our pensions represent the collective bargaining process to defer a portion of our wages until after retirement. Any effort now to reduce those benefits is a demand that we should receive less for our services to the University. Again, this is simply not acceptable.

Solvency shortfalls have been created over the past few years for many reasons, including the stock



market crisis, historically low interest rates, demographic pressures, flawed investment strategies, excessive employer contribution holidays and restrictive surplus funding rules. These are important factors to explain why pension plans have a solvency shortfall. But if the University and the Ontario Government truly wanted to ensure long term "sustainability" of pensions, then complex solutions are needed, not simplistic attacks on our members. While we do understand that the University currently has a pension funding problem, we are opposed to the Ontario Government's regulation linking temporary solvency relief to downloading a larger portion of the ongoing pension costs to the workers.

On March 21, 2010, the University of Guelph provided the union, along with other labour groups, a copy of the Stage 1 pension solvency application. While the University has communicated their position on solvency to the labour groups, there has not been "active engagement" with employee group leaders, as the university states. Rather, the university has presented their view while ignoring our offers for truly meaningful discussions to explore solutions that could work for all of us. We sent a letter of objection to the Minister of Finance, however, the government

has been very clear all along – they will not take any objections into consideration while considering temporary solvency relief applications for approval.

The fact is that our pension plan is and has been sustainable over the long term. Over the last ten years, the normal cost of our pension has not changed dramatically. There is no evidence that our pension plan has become any more or less expensive on a long term basis.

However, according to pension documents filed with the government by the University, the University of Guelph engaged in a protracted period of diverting budgeted normal pension funds by taking contribution holidays to the tune of \$28.6 million over the last decade. Of the \$28.6 million in contribution holidays that the University enjoyed, \$10 million in contribution holidays was since Oct 1, 2007 after an awareness of solvency issues. Now, under the proposed guidelines established by the government, the University is seeking to achieve a "Savings Target" of \$13 million by transferring this cost to the workers.

This in no way ensures sustainability or reduces any solvency deficit -- the same amount of money is to

If you are thinking of retiring, it would be in your best interest not to discuss such plans with your department ahead of time. Until your plans are firm and you are ready to commit to a retirement date, do not provide your department with any information. Based on recent changes and new developments on campus, a heads up to help the department with their planning is no longer an advisable action.

President's Report (Continued)

be contributed, but more of it will be from our pockets and less from the University's. It is an injustice to allow the University to take contribution holidays in good times, despite our repeated objections, then, require us to shoulder the burden in tough times.

Our union, along with others, has formed the Coalition of University Unions and has put forward a proposal to the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities for funding, in order that various labour pension stakeholders in the University sector could engage in meaningful discussions on pension sustainability. We are requesting the same funding the employers' group, the Council of Universities (COU), received to investigate and develop their position. But our proposal continues to be stalled. It is apparent that the government is willing to fund employers through the COU while collectively attacking workers' pensions.

The union strongly supports sustainable pension plans and would continue to welcome meaningful discussion on long term sustainability. We will strongly oppose reducing members' benefits or cost shifting onto workers as an acceptable solution. Such actions do not achieve sustainable pensions. While we object to a plan that simply takes more money out of our pockets while reducing the cost to the university, we remain willing to discuss potential solutions to the current solvency concerns that would be to the benefit of our members.



Day of Mourning

Several members representing USW Local 4120 attended the Day of Mourning ceremony and unveiling of the new monument in memory of workers who have been injured or lost their lives at work, erected outside Waterloo City Hall on 28 April 2011.

Following the ceremony members attended the USW South Central Area Council meeting and took part in health and safety training.



Local 4120 were acknowledged during the service for their donation of \$900 to the cost of the monument.

Cost of our Pension

If the cost of our pension is downloaded to us, as proposed in the application for temporary solvency relief, we will pay more, while the university pays less. If our contribution rates increased by as little as an additional 2%, as in the university's temporary solvency relief application, after we finish with our past service buy back in 2012 (4.9% to 6.9%), and assuming very modest base salary increases, the additional cost out of pocket for a member who currently makes \$45,000 per year, would be \$22,304.99 over 20 years. That's equal to a modest new car, a down payment on a modest home, a complete kitchen renovation or nearly the average debt of a student completing a university degree. It also means that **younger workers would be expected to pay significantly more over the long term** than those closer to retirement, just to achieve the same benefit.



Hamilton Day of Action

On January 29, 2011 a determined group of members of our local attended the Hamilton Day of Action to support members of USW Local 1005 in their struggle to defend themselves and 9,000 of their retirees against pressure from their employer, U.S. Steel to de-index pensions. Many of the 9,000 pensioners are now widows with meagre incomes. De-indexing would deprive them of annual cost of living increases. U.S. Steel locked out members of Local 1005 nine months ago rather than continue with negotiations.

"Our membership will need to rally to support retirement security for ourselves, our retirees and future employees as we negotiate our new contract this year" Kathleen Hyland

Adding further insult to its employees, U.S. Steel rewarded their CEO John Surma with an \$8.6 million raise in 2010, bringing his annual compensation to \$12.1 million. Although the battle of Hamilton Steel Local 1005 is against a foreign-ownership in the private sector, Local 4120 members' solidarity with this local is more than symbolic. Our Local is facing a similar attack on our retirement security and fairness in pension compensation for our members.



Paul Anderson, Treasurer, USW Local 4120

Over the past ten years, our membership has steadily contributed our share to our pension fund, while our employer has deemed it appropriate to take a pension contribution holiday of almost \$30 million. Now we are facing the possibility of pension concessions when the University President receives double pension credit for every year in office plus a special fund to top up **above** the maximum allowed under the Pension Income Tax Act.

The battle waged by Local 1005 is part of a larger national and international struggle to defend fair wages, benefits and retirement security for all of us.

In 2007, U.S. Steel, when it was lobbying for government approval to take over Stelco, pledged to honour Stelco's pension obligations. Four years later, the company has locked out its employees and reneged on this promise. U.S. is shipping coal to its Hamilton supplies and business to operations outside of Canada during this lock-out taking much needed economic stimulus out of the Hamilton and Canadian economy.



Kathleen Hyland, USW Local 4120

Our membership will need to rally to support retirement security for ourselves, our retirees and future employees as we negotiate our new contract this year. Let's take inspiration from the 10,000 people who stood shoulder-to-shoulder to support Local 1005 in this same struggle on January 29th.

That's why 10,000 people from across Canada attended the Hamilton rally on a chilly winter day to support Local 1005.



USW Canadian National Health & Safety Conference, 17-20 April 2011, Westin Bayshore Hotel, Vancouver

Two Local 4120 Health & Safety Committee members, Alan Miller (Physics Department) and David Atkinson (Physics Department) attended the national Health and Safety Conference in British Columbia.

David Atkinson Reports on the conference.

Firstly, I would like to thank the members of Local 4120 for sending me to attend this important HSE conference.



Alan Miller & David Atkinson

As a first time visitor to Vancouver I was impressed with the 'green' attitude of the city residents, the prevalence of trails and bike lanes, Burrard Inlet, coastal mountains, Stanley Park, and an early spring!

**STAY
HEALTHY**

The city is beautiful and in full Stanley cup fever....Go Canucks!

Introductory and lovely remarks from the granddaughter of the Chief Elder of the First Nations lands, upon which Vancouver sits, reminded us all of the deep respect and connection to nature we must maintain while in Vancouver.

The conference was 3 full days of presentations by numerous city officials, political candidates, directors, professors, lawyers, survivors, and experts on health, safety and the environment.



USW Canadian Health & Safety Conference (continued)

As delegates we attended various workshops delivered by some of the best professionals in the business to learn about emerging trends in the safety arena. We got a glimpse into some pretty dire trends in the U.S. which is a real concern here with so many foreign takeovers in Canada.

Thanks again for sending me, the conference was AWESOME, educational and motivating. It reminds us about the importance of our role as a safety representative and our duty to you. *David Atkinson*



Things like BTW ‘blame the worker’, BBS ‘behavior based safety’, incentive & injury discipline programs, the ‘at risk worker’, ‘the unsafe act’, ‘freedom within fences’, ‘the orange vest strategy’, ‘safety is not a gadget it is a state of mind’, <http://www.hazards.org/bs/>.



Other topics very well presented at the conference included: the Hazards of Restructuring, the Pacific Coast University initiative, Engaging Youth in the Union, What young people think about Unions, as well as a session on Union Strategies for Better Health and Safety.

The Alberta Worker’s Centre Theatre Troupe entertained delegates with a Play “That’s Danger” which is designed for fu-

Sadly we learned that many of the new safety systems take the focus away from fixing the hazard and blaming the worker. Why not give the incentive to the worker that identifies the hazard

ture young workers presently in high schools. This was a smash and generated all sorts of interest from delegates from other provinces who would like to employ the method in their Young Worker Awareness programs.

I brought back some excellent literature and in order to trickle down any new information that may interest you please feel free to contact me for consultation (ext. 56438).

As well, an interactive Talk Show style Stop-Start-Continue session was used to engage workers in how to compete with the Chinese in manufacturing.

and not the one who hides an injury?

United Steelworkers Local 4120 Scholarship Recipients

Paisley MacLeod(2010)

Daughter of USW members Sharon Beach and John MacLeod. Paisley is a President's Scholar in her second year of her B.A. program majoring in Women's Studies with a minor in Studio Art. Many of her courses have been selected to allow her to focus on her primary passion: film. She is looking forward to a career as a film director. In her spare time, Paisley draws comics, knits, plays guitar and watches British comedy shows. She is especially grateful for the United Steelworkers Local 4120 Scholarship.



Samuel Mosonyi (2011)



Son of USW Member Marta Steiner-Mosonyi, Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology. Samuel is a Board of Governors' Scholar currently in his first year at the University of Guelph, double majoring in Political Science and Criminal Justice & Public Policy. Samuel hopes to use his degree to pursue his lifelong goal to become a lawyer, and aspires to enter law school upon completion of his BA. The USW Local 4120 Scholarship will ease the financial burdens associated with achieving this goal!

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 * **Scholarships Available to USW Local 4120 members and their families** *
 * **Please Check out Local 4120 website** (<http://www.uswa4120.ca/education/scholarships.htm>) *
 * **for details on the following scholarships** *
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- United Steelworkers Local 4120 Scholarship
- USW Secondary School Scholarships
- The Norma Berti Steelworker Education Scholarship
- The David Ellis Scholarship

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Steelworkers Humanity Fund Contributes \$20,000 Toward Relief and Reconstruction in Japan

"The Steelworkers Humanity Fund is contributing \$20,000 toward emergency aid and reconstruction efforts following the March 11 earthquake and tsunami in Japan," said Ken Neumann, USW National Director for Canada.

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund contribution is in response to requests from Japanese trade unions. The Steelworkers' contribution will be channelled through the ICEM (International Chemical Energy and Mining Unions Federation) affiliates in Japan, and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). The CLC Japan Disaster Relief Fund will transfer funds to the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC-RENGO).

"Japan is a relatively rich economy and we are confident that Japanese communities will have the ability and resources to mount a successful rebuilding effort. Nevertheless thousands of individual union members and their families in Japan have been devastated and the sheer magnitude of the rebuilding effort is enormous," Neumann said.

"The contribution of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund means that Japanese unions will have additional resources to be able to alleviate hardship and speed recovery for their members."

The disaster left over 18,000 dead, inflicted extensive damage and led to significant accidents at two major nuclear power stations.

Founded in 1985, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund is a registered charitable organization. Steelworkers members contribute to the Fund through clauses negotiated into collective agreements (and in some cases matching contributions come from employers, although not at the University of Guelph).



Contributors to this issue of Steelwire

Wendy Morley, President
Liz Cherry, Vice -President
Kathleen Hyland, Steward
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