

THE
ALLY
A PUBLICATION OF CUPE LOCAL 3906

Volume 1 Issue 3

The People vs US Steel

USW 1005 Lockout and the Provincial Day of Action

Also Featuring:
Unit 1 Benefits Changes
Upcoming Rounds of Bargaining
Big Susie's Sex Worker Advocacy Group

Letter From the President

Dear Members:

Welcome to our winter issue of the newly launched "Ally" (formerly the "CUPE Quarterly"). Here's some of what's in store for you in this issue:

If you've attended any of our fall 2010 GMMs or read our e-mail updates, you'll know that there are some benefits changes on the way for Unit 1 members. You can find more information in Rebecca Strung's article. Remember, benefits are contract issues: together we can fight to improve them in negotiations!

Speaking of bargaining...it's that time again for TAs, RAs and Postdocs! Both contracts expire in August of 2011. We're gearing up for another round! Over the next few months, we'll be contacting you about your bargaining priorities, and looking to you to get involved in consultations and bargaining support. Find out more about the upcoming round in Diana Zawadzki's article.

Last but not least, 2011 is shaping up to be a historic year for our sisters and brothers in USW local 1005. They have been locked out by U.S. Steel since November 7, 2011, because they have refused to agree to contract changes that would gut pensions for retirees and incoming members alike. This fight is historic not only for workers in Hamilton, but for workers across the entire country, as the outcome will set a precedent for a foreign corporation's ability to renege on commitments to labour standards in our communities. This is your chance to be a part of history: join the fight to defend workers' rights near and far!

I've got a feeling that 2011 will be an important year...help make history here in Hamilton and at McMaster by standing up as workers for dignity and justice for all!

In solidarity,
Mary Ellen Campbell
President, CUPE 3906

CUPE 3906 Equity Statement

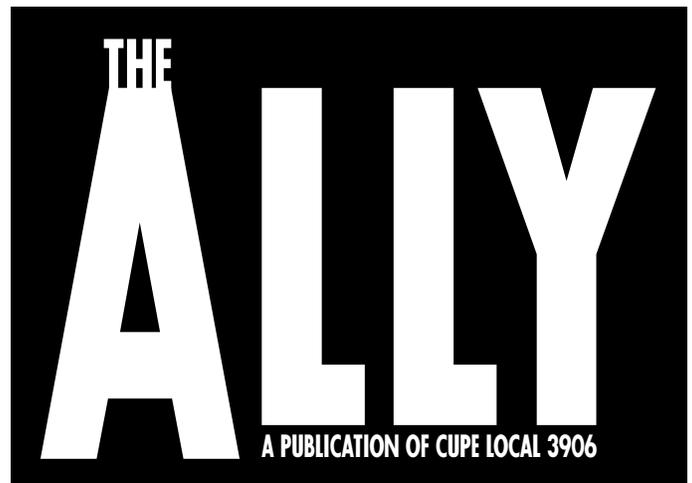
Union solidarity is based on the principle that union members are equal and deserve mutual respect at all levels. Any behaviour that creates conflict prevents union members from working together to strengthen the union and its initiatives.

As unionists we aim to achieve mutual respect, cooperation and understanding throughout our membership. We neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

A hostile or offensive environment includes discriminatory speech or conduct, which is racist, sexist, transphobic or homophobic and/or discrimination based on (in)ability, age, class, religion, language and ethnic origin. A hostile and intimidating environment also includes attempts to de-voice other members by ignoring GMM speaking practices or by talking over, yelling, rolling eyes at or shutting down contributions made by others.

Sometimes discrimination takes the form of harassment. Harassment means using real or perceived power to abuse, devalue or humiliate others. Harassment will not be perceived or treated as frivolous behaviour. The uneasiness and resentment that harassment creates hinder the growth of the union by hampering our capacity to work together on shared concerns such as decent wages, safe working conditions and justice in the workplace, society and in our union.

The above-mentioned components of a hostile environment hurt and divide the union and compromise CUPE's policies and commitments to equality. Members, staff and elected officers must be mindful that all members deserve dignity, equality and respect.



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Nick Longaphy

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The People vs US Steel

All out for the January 29th Day of Action



In 2007, despite numerous objections and concerns over foreign ownership, US Steel took over Stelco, making assurances to the federal government that it would “maintain employment levels.” Since that point the company has shown itself to be totally unconcerned with the impacts of its decisions on Stelco employees and retirees, as well as the broader Hamilton community.

In 2009 US Steel closed down production at two Canadian Stelco plants in Hamilton and Fort Erie. These actions caused the federal government to sue US Steel under the Investment Canada Act. In court proceedings US Steel has admitted that these closures were undertaken to manipulate North American steel prices for the company's benefit.

On Nov 7, 2010, in an attempt to force pension concessions on members of USWA 1005, US Steel locked out 900 workers at the Hamilton plant. These workers are on the front line of a fight against major concessions to a pension plan with over 9000 members. The main issue is over protecting indexation of retirees' pensions, which protect pension income against inflation. A second concession removing the defined-benefit pension for new hires means that these 900 workers currently locked out are not just fighting for those who came before them, but those who will be employed in whatever steel industry continues to exist in Hamilton.

These pension concessions are coming at the same time as the Harper government is attempting to turn public pensions over to public banks. The fight at US Steel is only the beginning of the fight for retirement security for every Canadian.

In addition to the incredible impact on locked out workers, the closure of this plant has a huge impact on the great city of Hamilton, removing over \$100 million in wages from the local economy. As pointed out by Robert H Thompson, the former Treasurer of Stelco Inc. in the Hamilton Spectator “the economic fallout in Hamilton from this plant's closure will be serious and long lasting. This city can ill afford the loss of \$1 billion in economic activity and the permanent loss of high-paying industrial jobs.”

On January 29th a Day of Action organized by USW 1005 and the Ontario Federation of Labour will bring activists from across the province to a rally outside city hall in support of the locked out workers.

What Can You Do?

- **Come out to the Day of Action on at 1:00pm on January 29th outside Hamilton City Hall**
- Join the picket line in solidarity. The picket line is set up at Wilcox St. gate on Burlington St.
- Stay informed – check out the USWA 1005 website at www.uswa1005.ca
- Get a lawn sign to show your support for the fight to protect pensions in Canada
- Donations can be dropped off in the CUPE 3906 office
- Email politicalaction@cupe3906.org to get involved



Hamilton CUPE members join the picket line.

Photo by Greg Taylor

Your Unit 1 Benefits Have Changed

Your new benefits coverage explained

By Rebecca Strung, Benefits & Advocacy Officer

Unit 1 members approved a **new Unit 1 Benefits Model** at the December General Membership meeting. The new benefits model will take effect on **January 1, 2011**.

The new Unit 1 benefits model will have a significant impact on benefits claims procedures and, depending on when you make your claim, the amount of money you may be entitled to receive.

NOTE: These changes DO NOT affect your Unit 1 Dental Benefits

1) NEW BENEFITS MODEL OVERVIEW

Non-Dental benefits come from a \$150,000 benefits fund, which the Employer is mandated to provide the union with under the terms of the Unit 1 Collective Agreement.

Under the old benefits model, individuals were entitled to a maximum of \$250/two years for vision care, \$100/year for UHIP, and \$100/year for childcare. Claims were processed throughout the academic year on a first come, first serve basis. Members always received the maximum amount to which they were entitled, regardless of the amount of money that remained in the benefits fund.

Under the new benefits model, individual entitlements will remain the same. Total benefits expenditures for Vision and UHIP will be capped at \$90,000 and \$30,000 respectively during the regular academic year (September – April) OR until the cap is reached (whichever comes first). A small amount of money (\$20,000 for Vision; \$5,000 for UHIP) will be held back for the summer months.

During the regular academic year (or until the cap is reached), Vision and UHIP claims will be processed on a first come, first serve

basis. Members will receive the maximum amount to which they are entitled. In other words, Vision and UHIP work exactly the same way as they did under the old system from September to April (or until the cap is reached).

During the summer months (or after the cap is reached), all claims are processed and reimbursed at the end of the semester. Individual reimbursements will depend on how much money is left in the benefits fund.* In other words, members who claim during the summer months will have their maximum entitlement reduced in years with high benefits expenditures. In years with low benefits expenditures, the maximum entitlement will not change during the summer months.

Childcare benefit expenses are negligible at present and will not be subject to a cap.

* The maximum individual reimbursement is the lesser of the remaining funds divided by the number of claims and the current benefit (\$250 for Vision; \$100 for UHIP).

2) INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS UNDER THE NEW MODEL

VISION CARE

Entitlement: The maximum entitlement remains \$250 / two years.

Claims Procedure: Vision Care claims are processed on a first come first serve basis during the Fall and Winter terms (or until expenditures reach the \$90,000 cap). During this period, the amount of money applied for is the amount members will receive.

During the Summer terms (or after the \$90,000 cap is reached), vision care claims are held until the end of the term. The maximum amount members receive depends on how much money is left in

the Vision care fund. In some years, members will still be entitled to claim the maximum. In other years, members may be entitled to less than \$250.

UHIP

Entitlement: The maximum entitlement remains \$100/ year.

Claims Procedure: UHIP claims are processed on a first come first serve basis during the Fall and Winter terms (or until expenditures reach the \$30,000 cap). During this period, the amount of money applied for is the amount members will receive.

During the Summer terms (or after the \$30,000 cap is reached), UHIP claims are held until the end of the term. The maximum amount members receive depends on how much money is left in the Vision care fund. In some years, members will still be entitled to \$100, In other years, members may be entitled to less than \$100.

CHILDCARE:

Entitlement: The maximum entitlement remains \$100/ year.

Claims procedure: Childcare claims are processed on a first come, first serve basis throughout the academic year.

3) WHY WAS A NEW BENEFITS MODEL NECESSARY?

Over the past five years, Unit 1 benefits expenditures have frequently exceeded the amount of money the Employer is obligated to provide for benefits under the collective agreement. We attempted to negotiate a reasonable increase to benefits funds during the last round of bargaining, but the Employer refused to contribute any new money to benefits—even after Unit 1 members went on strike.

After a week on strike, in November 2009 a slim majority of Unit 1 members voted to accept a collective agreement that did not include any new money for benefits. During the negotiation process, the bargaining team repeatedly informed Unit 1 members that: a) their benefits funds were in deficit and b) ratification of this agreement would result in benefits cuts.

The upcoming changes to Unit 1 benefits are necessary to restore the fiscal health of our over-stretched benefits funds in the absence of any new money for benefits from the Employer.

4) HOW WAS THE CAPPED MODEL CHOSEN?

The benefits committee investigated several ways of achieving an overall reduction in Unit 1 benefits expenditures. We distilled our research down into three different benefits reduction models, which we brought to the membership for discussion at the October and December GMMs. One of these models was a straight reduction to individual benefits entitlements. The other two were capped distribution models. After a thorough discussion, the membership voted to accept the capped distribution model presented here.

Interested members can read the minutes of this discussion at the next General Membership Meeting or come and speak to someone at the CUPE office.

Member Profile

Name: Mark J. Gulla

Department: History

Year of Study: 3rd

Previous Studies: York University (BA Hons., MA)

Current Research Title: “The Unemployment Insurance Commission and the Expansion of the Right to Benefit, 1940-1971.”

Current Research Area: Post-war Canadian welfare state; social welfare policy.

Source Base Being Used: Case Files; records of the Unemployment Insurance Commission and associated departments of the federal government.

Thoughts on Being a CUPE 3906 Member: The most memorable time I have had of being a CUPE member was picketing and being able to take part in the November 2009 strike. There was never a dull moment.

Thoughts on Attending McMaster University: What I value most about being a member of McMaster's wonderful History Department is the Wilson Institute for Canadian History. It is an invaluable resource of support for Canadian PhD students like myself. I have greatly benefitted from the Institute's programme, whether it be through its support for research travel, attending fascinating lectures by professors from various universities throughout Canada and the world, or the workshops and seminars it has organized.

Career Goals: Like any PhD student, I want to complete the thesis in 4 years and get a tenured position in the academy shortly after being awarded the doctorate. I would also like a career in the federal civil service and hope to one day work in the Office of the Prime Minister.





Upcoming Bargaining Rounds

By Diana Zawadzki, Recording Secretary

Unit 1 (TA/RA in lieu) and Unit 3 (postdoctoral fellows) collective agreements are expiring in August 2011, which means both units will be heading into bargaining this spring.

Before bargaining begins, there is much work to be done. Members of our local will start by collecting data on what our members are looking for in their new collective agreements. Although some of this work is ongoing, in the form of meetings, emails, and grievances filed by members, in order to find out what is most important to you, we will be drafting surveys and begin consultation meetings in departments across campus. The data collected will be used to put together our bargaining priorities. These priorities will be the driving force behind the demands made at the bargaining table with the employer.

Beyond collecting data about the needs of our members, there will also be elections for both bargaining teams. The teams will draw up bargaining timelines including when we file our “notice to bargain.” The earliest this notice can be filed is 6 months before the expiry of a collective agreement. It tells our employer that we are ready to begin booking dates to meet at the negotiating/bargaining table. For those unfamiliar with the bargaining process, both teams meet to discuss proposals put “on the table” (i.e. changes to the collective agreement proposed by either side). Teams usually meet and bargain changes until an impasse is reached. Once neither side is willing to move on one or more of the tabled proposals, either (or sometimes both) side will file for conciliation. Although this sounds like an aggressive move it is a normal part of bargaining, as at some point during negotiations one or both sides come to an important proposal that the other side is unwilling to agree to. An impartial conciliator is appointed by

the Ministry of Labour to help move along negotiations in the hopes of reaching a fair deal. Once a conciliator is appointed, talks at the table are often then referred to as “conciliation” rather than “negotiation.”

Once conciliation begins, either side can then file a “no board report.” This report is submitted to the province to indicate that negotiations have reached a stalemate. This move typically increases the pressure on the other side to start caving into demands, as it starts the countdown to a strike/lock-out date. The earliest in the bargaining process that a strike/lock-out can be called is 14 business days after the no board report is filed. A strike is called when the union decides that the only way to reach a fair deal is to withdraw their labour. The purpose of a strike is to make the employer realize that the institution cannot run properly without its employees and cave to some or all of the members’ demands. A lock-out is called when the employer decides the union is being unreasonable and stops paying the employees of that bargaining unit. In trades and factory workplaces it is easier to picture a lock-out as the doors to a factory are literally locked, barring the employees from entering.

In order to have a successful round of bargaining we are asking members to get involved and be pro-active. We are looking for volunteers to create and circulate our bargaining surveys and run our consultation meetings. We are also looking for individuals to join both our bargaining support teams and bargaining teams. If you are looking for less of a time commitment please answer our surveys, and stay informed about the bargaining process. Remember that your executive are also members of the union, we are working for you and in your best interest. The more we hear from you the better we can represent your needs to our employer.

Big Susie's Sex Worker Advocacy Group Gets Started in Hamilton

By: Sanchari Sur

An exhibition held at the end of summer in 2009 at the *You Me Gallery* in Hamilton sparked controversy and gave birth to Big Susie's Sex Worker Advocacy Group when it showed photographs taken of street based sex workers taken with surveillance cameras. Amber Dean, board member of Big Susie's, explains further about the exhibit that made evident the group's necessity, "The owner of [The] Pearl Company... put together an art show that exhibited photographs and surveillance images that

he had taken of women doing street sex work outside of his gallery and theatre. And, he exhibited these [photographs] without their knowledge and... consent."



The artist in question is Gary Santucci,

whose exhibition was described on the *You Me Gallery* website as "turn[ing his] lenses

on the city's underbelly and [his] mind to the immense question of how we can make positive social change." Dean, who has done academic work in the area with her PhD on representations of women doing sex work in inter-city neighbourhoods elsewhere in the country, considers that Santucci could have been "well intentioned but he ha[s] absolutely no analysis about sex work." He had "no concern for the kinds of risks that he was exposing the women to when he... put up these pictures."

The uglier picture behind Santucci's "well intentioned" art exhibit lies in his personal agenda to secure zoning permits for his art gallery and theatre that he didn't have. Santucci wants to be seen as a "moral crusader... who wanted to shine a bright light in the dark corner of Hamilton that nobody wanted to look at," but either fails

or refuses to take into account the consequences of his art show. According to Dean, "There has been a real increase in hostility towards people who do street based sex work in Hamilton, including some neighbourhood groups that have gotten involved organizing with the police out of a desire to displace street based sex workers and push them out of residential areas into somewhere else." Big Susie's aims to counteract the negative attitudes towards sex work and sex workers. Dean contends that "there... was nothing in Hamilton that was specifically doing advocacy for sex workers on a sex positive basis and was advocating decriminalizing." Big Susie's came into being with five board members and a mailing list of a large number of supporters drawn through their past two events, and through support and funding from CUPE 3906 this fall.

But coming about even as a small collaborative group wasn't easy: "We received some positive... and negative press. Some of that negative press suggest[ed] that by promoting sex work, [we] are also promoting violence against women." However, after having received funding from CUPE and overwhelming turnouts at their last two public events, Big Susie's is optimistic about their growth. Currently, the group hopes to have new people join their board and help build the organization, as well as to hold workshops specifically for street based sex workers on harm reduction and basic safety and first aid.

Their next public event is on December 17 2010, which has been specifically chosen for being the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers. It is being held at The Factory Media Arts Center in downtown Hamilton, and features a collection of short films that celebrate sex and presents sex work in a positive manner.

To learn more about Big Susie's Sex Worker Advocacy Group, or to get involved, email bigsusies@live.ca.

BENEFITS INFO, COMMITTEE
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all on www.cupe3906.org



Political Action Committee Call to Action

Local Labour Struggles are Related to G20 Agendas



Graphic from Toronto Community Mobilization Network

It's been a crazy, chaotic, busy, and frustrating year for McMaster and for Hamilton. In the past year, enrollment has continued to go up along with class size, while numerous departments are being told they cannot hire additional professors. Some whole departments are being downsized. CUPE 3906 Unit 1 employees (TA/RAs) have lost health benefits, and a number of people are now realizing that the increased wage does not offset the increased tuition and fees. This has actually resulted in lower take-home pay for many international and some social science and humanities students. More recently, the custodial staff of SEIU Local 2 must suffer with a two-year wage freeze which leaves workers earning barely the living wage estimated for a family of two. Off campus, negotiations with U.S. Steel have completely broken down, and the Local 1005 United Steel Workers have been locked out of their own factory. As of November 8, U.S. Steel has suspended health, life and disability benefits for all active bargaining unit members. In a place known historically as the "Steel City", this is a slap in the face not only for current steel workers and thousands of retirees, but also for the cultural identity of Hamilton.

These various labour struggles are not isolated events. Instead, these are the trickle-down effects of decisions made behind closed doors at the Group of 20 (G20) economic summit meetings like the one held earlier this summer in Toronto. While the G20 states that it "promotes open and constructive discussion between industrial and emerging-market countries ... to support growth and development across the globe," what we see actually resulting from the implementation of its policies is a move away from publically funded social and economic infrastructures. The austerity measures and other political and economic tactics that have been used on campus and by U.S. Steel in east Hamilton are the same tactics being applied across North America and the rest of the world. As one Hamiltonian told a *Spectator* journalist: "this isn't the first time she has seen an American company take over a Canadian firm, strip benefits from workers and then close the plant."

As *Rabble.ca* columnist Stephan Christoff aptly put it, "'Sustainable economic growth' is the refrain but 'growth for whom' is the question." Many people are concerned that these economic policies threaten, rather than protect, the economic, social, and physical

health of billions of people across the world. Several organizations speaking out against the policies of the G20 include The Ontario Federation of Labour, The Council of Canadians, Greenpeace, the Canadian Federation of Students, the Hamilton Coalition Against the G20, the United Steel Workers Local 1005, several CUPE Locals, and the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP). "We protested because we know that the policies of the G20 affect poor people every day: [such as] decisions to fund security and prisons instead of schools and community centres; decisions to cut public services; childcare and welfare at the same time as giving huge tax breaks to corporations and banks," states OCAP on their website. But people speaking out against the G20 are being surveilled, infiltrated, arrested, and in some cases beaten and abused.

The criminalization of dissent is the process by which governments employ a combination of tactics, including the creation of new forms of legislation such as the Anti Terrorism Act of 2006 and implementation of new police forces such as Integrated Security Unit established for the Toronto Summit, for the purpose of quieting those who would speak out against current forms of leadership.

York University graduate Honor Brabazon describes in his 2006 thesis how public dissent and other forms of peaceful expression are being transformed from citizens' rights (protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedom) into criminal acts of treason. He explains that under legislation such as the War Measures Act of 1970 and the more recent Anti-Terrorism Act (Bill C-36) after the events of September 11, 2001, as well as the Patriot Act in the United States, police actions are seen not as violations of civil liberties, but rather as necessary to provide protection. But many scholars, activists, labourers, retirees, veterans, and others are asking, "protection for whom?"

Who was really being protected by the more than 5,000 police and 10,000 RCMP Mounties this June, which have cost Canada over \$833 million? Certainly the protesters and bystanders who were beaten, shot, frisked, arrested, and detained do not feel protected. The world leaders and their staff members in attendance at the G20 summit only stayed in Toronto for a matter of days, and yet arrests have been continuing for months. Who, then, are the police protecting?

The Political Action Committee of CUPE 3906 has been involved in organizing peaceful and safe forms of resistance to the G20 since last spring. We are a member-driven semi-autonomous branch of the union which is directly answerable to the general membership. Our committee mandate is provide support to grassroots organizations and other movements which have the greatest capacity to effect positive social change in the Hamilton area, or beyond. We do this in a variety of ways, for a variety of causes. Our involvement over the past year in the peaceful resistance to the G20 serves as an excellent example of our organizing strength and the many types of support we can offer.

Starting last March, the PAC has worked with the Hamilton Coalition Against the G20, the Hamilton Solidarity Group, the Toronto Community Mobilization Network, and other individuals in order to organize a public forum on the G20 before the summit, and provide transportation to and from the Toronto summit protests on June 25 and 26. The PAC also provided in-kind donations for photocopying flyers and leaflets, built and distributed safety kits for protestors, and participated in the summit protests. Everyone who accompanied PAC to the summit protests on June 25 and 26 returned to Hamilton safely. Unfortunately, hundreds of other protestors were not so lucky.

On June 27, the day after the summit ended, police stampeded the University of Toronto Graduate Student's Union and surprised sleeping political activists, arresting approximately 70 people and hauling them off in buses to a detention center. The same day, another large arrest occurred in Toronto at Queen Street and Spadina Avenue. Since the summit has ended, more than 1,100 people have been arrested, making this the largest mass arrest in Canadian history. Some of these people were not even involved in the G20 protests, like Mike Hamilton, who was picked up on June 27 just a block outside of his home. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has said "It appears that after 5 p.m. on Saturday, the constitutional protection against arbitrary detention and unreasonable searches had effectively been suspended across downtown Toronto."

I want to correct that statement by saying that the suspension of these constitutional protections was enacted way before 5 p.m. on Saturday. A local man, and member of the Hamilton Coalition Against the G20, was picked up by Toronto police four days before the summit – or the protests – even began! This means that the mass arrests were not so much a reaction to social dissent as they were a carefully orchestrated, prepaid-for strategy to subvert public speech. I also want to remind readers that our rights to speech are still being actively violated. The most recent violation related to the Toronto summit occurred September 17, when an activist out on bail was arrested for speaking at a panel discussion on G20 resistance at Ryerson University.

In the aftermath of the summit meeting, the PAC has dedicated ourselves to educating the public about issues surrounding the G20 arrests and civil liberties violations, and raising funds for the legal defense of Torontonians and Hamiltonians detainees facing a variety of charges. The PAC stood in solidarity with other members from CUPE 3906 and other organizations and individuals in front of the Hamilton Police Station the week after the G20 summit, to

protest the mass arrests and demand a public inquiry into the police actions. We also helped organize the Hamilton Coalition Against the G20's public forum in August titled "Stand Up! Fight Back!", which raised funds for those facing charges in connection with the G20 resistance.

As of October 14, the charges against 169 of 308 detained G20 protesters have been dropped, according to a CBC news report. (Although over 1,000 people were arrested, most were released uncharged). While this is great news for the individual detainees and their loved ones, it is also a somber reminder of the ridiculousness of the G20-related police actions. Over \$1 billion of the Canadian public's money has been wasted on excessive security, frivolous arrests, and the legal defense needed to free these people. In a time of global economic belt-tightening, we should all be outraged at this inappropriate consumption of Canadian resources.

The PAC is opposed to the G20 for a number of reasons. This group acts without a charter and outside of the jurisdiction of the United Nations (UN), holding summits behind closed doors. The decisions the G20 makes impact every person on the planet, and yet the membership reflects the concerns of only a fraction of the world's nations and cultures. Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Støre told Der Spiegel magazine in Germany that the G20 is "one of the greatest setbacks since World War II." Although his country is the largest contributor to World Bank and UN development programs, it is not represented in the G20 membership.

Enormous amounts of money are spent on building G20 summit meeting grounds, like the artificial islands recently constructed to house the Seoul summit on November 11-12. Millions of dollars are spent to provide security, which effectively is being used to silence dissidents and deny thousands of citizens' democratic rights to question the actions of their leaders.

Finally, we are opposed to the criminalization of dissent. It is NOT illegal to peacefully critique your leaders and to expect those leaders to provide legitimate and honest answers to your questions.

The PAC sees a direct link between the G20 and recent local struggles over labour in Hamilton. In the coming months as we move into the new year and another academic term, the PAC is committed to continue working on G20 and related issues, for as long as human rights violations, employee rights violations, and the criminalization of dissent continues. We are able to provide support through a variety of mechanisms including cash and in-kind donations, letter-writing and media production, campaign and event organizing, and of course – good old fashioned picketing! Currently, we are encouraging the McMaster community of students, staff, and faculty to attend the upcoming Hamilton Day of Action in support of the 1005 United Steel Workers. This event is free and open to the public and will be held at City Hall on 71 Main Street West on January 29 at 1 p.m.

For more information about the November 26 panel discussion, email hamiltong20resistance@gmail.com. To stay updated on the steel workers' struggle, visit www.uswa1005.ca/. For more information about the PAC, or to find out when we will hold our next meeting or how you can become involved, email politicalaction@cupe3906.org.



Broken Building

The challenges of Wentworth House

By Nick Longaphy, Communications Officer

Many Graduate Students new to McMaster University this year may be unaware of the amount of construction and renovation that took place across the McMaster campus prior to the beginning of the fall 2010 semester. New pathways as well as improved courtyards and landscaping have made the campus more attractive for the staff and students who cross it daily, as well as for prospective students and visitors to our University.

Mirroring this physical improvement has been an attempt to expand the skills of Graduate Students through the implementation of a required AODA training programme. AODA, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, is designed to give Graduate Students the tools required to capably and fairly handle circumstances that involve physical, educational, or other kinds of student accessibility.

Luckily, McMaster University designated this mandatory for Graduate Students, not TAs, otherwise all CUPE members would receive compensation for the AODA training at the rate of TA pay. But I digress, as that is a topic for another article. Despite the recent conclusion of this remodelling and re-training, Accessibility on campus remains a problem for CUPE members and students alike at Wentworth House.

Located at the east end of the McMaster campus, on your left-hand side if using the Sterling entrance, Wentworth House has undergone minimal renovation in recent years to create office space for Graduate Students and Administrative Staff. Many readers will associate this building more closely with other tenants of Wentworth House, such as the on-campus Daycare Centre, the GSA Office, the Muslim Students Association, MAC-Cycle, our own CUPE Office, or the Grad Student Pub, *The Phoenix*.

As someone who works daily in Wentworth House, keeping office hours, working as a part of the CUPE executive, or, occasionally, working on my own research I have been witness to many of

the problems the building suffers from: general maintenance is inadequate to keep the building in good repair, heating or cooling the space is difficult, and the facilities have become inadequate for use by several of its tenants. In short, the building is old, and getting older.

Assurances from the University Administration that Wentworth House is nearing the end of its life are now years old, and renovations to accommodate more tenants for the building have been undertaken as recently as a year ago. This certainly leads one to question how long we will be meeting students and holding office hours in Wentworth House, even after *The Phoenix* finds new digs.

But the biggest problem with Wentworth House in its current capacity, is its lack of accessibility for members of the McMaster community. Undergrads attending office hours, Graduate Students who have office space in the building or want to visit the GSA, CUPE members who are seeking assistance at our office, or even guests to the campus who want to tip back a drink at the pub should not expect a building that is near accessible, otherwise they will be disappointed.

Even if Wentworth House is demolished or completely vacated to begin the 2011/2012 school year (unlikely but possible) what about the students, guests, staff, and other employees who need to access services in the building this year? Should not a commitment to campus improvement and education for employees on accessibility be combined into an effort to make the whole campus accessible to the students who we, as Graduate Students, are being trained to serve?

If you or someone you know has a problem accessing the services that are quartered in Wentworth House, we would really like your feedback on this ongoing problem, one that will continue to be raised at Labour Management Committee Meetings and at every bargaining table that CUPE is seated.

There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.

-- Mahatma Gandhi

World hunger haunts people everyday. People in our own city, people in our own country and people all over the world. It's out there. And because of this, the world is a paradox. Everyday, we have people dying from being over weight and people dying from being under weight.

My photo consists of two hands covered in dirt holding a very little amount of white rice. The dirty hands symbolize the poverty and deprivation that people go through on a day-to-day basis. The rice symbolizes what little food these people actually have.

The quote, "there are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread," was said by Mahatma Gandhi.

I believe that Gandhi is simply stating that poverty is causing people to lose their faith, and that the only time they do remember God is when they are eating.

Capturing an image that has a story or a message is something that I always try to convey through my photography. I've always loved to take pictures, but recently my love has flourished. Realizing that a photo truly is worth a thousand words has helped me capture meaningful and controversial subjects like world hunger.

Hannah Abram
1st Year Humanities

Guinea • El Salvador •
Nigeria • Haiti • Sri
Lanka • Guinea-Bissau •
Mongolia • Madagascar •
Swaziland • Ethiopia •
Sierra Leone • Malawi •
Mozambique • Rwanda •
Indonesia • Liberia •
Kyrgyzstan • South
Africa • Zambia • Togo •
Tanzania • Timor -
Leste • Senegal • Peru •
Nepal • Mali • Kenya •



27 In-need Ave
Povertyland,
Earth
HLP OUT

We Need You!

Vacant positions in your union

Health & Safety: We need representatives to sit on Joint Health & Safety Committees! Each JHSC is a group of worker and management reps who meet monthly to discuss health and safety issues at McMaster, and make recommendations to the university. We need you to be the eyes and ears of the Union at these meetings, and in return, you're compensated at your regular rate of pay for attendance. To be eligible to sit on a committee, you must be a member of one of the units that has a vacancy, and work in one of the buildings covered by that committee. For a full list of vacancies, go to <http://www.cupe3906.org/wordpress/archives/875#more-875>.

Executive Committee: Currently there are two vacant positions on the local executive. If you're interested in running for Vice President or Unit 2 Chief Steward please contact Mary Ellen Campbell at president@cupe3906.org.

Unit 1 and Unit 3 Bargaining Teams: Unit 1 or Unit 3 member? Interested in participating in the bargaining process for collective agreements that are up for renewal this year? Contact Mary Ellen Campbell at president@cupe3906.org



Call for Testimonies Forum on Graduate and Undergraduate (In)visible Dis/ability Supports at McMaster

CUPE 3906's Equity Action Committee are inviting graduate and undergraduate students to submit brief testimonies (2-5 minutes in length, maximum 500 words, in any format) to be shared at a forum on questions around (in)visible dis/ability support at McMaster. We imagine the event as one in which people can share their experiences and begin to develop a community in which concerns can be raised, and ideally, that may lead to many directions, from social events, to a range of creative venues to spread awareness about dis/ability issues, to creating a report on policy recommendations for the union and the university.

Possible questions/topics include the following:

- How has your experience at McMaster with regard to dis/ability support been?
- Dis/ability in the classroom
- TAing or RAing with a dis/ability
- The supervisor/thesis committee and supervisee relationship
- Peer support
- Discrimination
- Interlocking oppressions
- Stigmatization
- Ally support



Please submit your paper/response to us by Wednesday, February 2, 2011 at equity@cupe3906.org. We look forward to your submissions and please contact us if you have any questions. The forum will take place on Wednesday, February 9, 2011 from 3:30 to 5:30 (room TBA). Even if you are choosing not to submit or share a testimony for the forum, please feel free to join us. Light refreshments will be available.

Defend Pensions - Support USW Local 1005

Hamilton Day of Action

Hamilton City Hall - 1pm - January 29, 2011



THE PEOPLE vs U.S. STEEL