



G S U

N e w s

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GSU and SWP bargaining begins

On February 12 GSU's Bargaining Committee met representatives of SWP management to begin agreement renewal bargaining covering the Offices and Operations bargaining units

The February 12 meeting was attended by the Rick Eisnor, Carolyn Illerbrun, Brian Suer, Rod Peterson and Brad Lindahl who were elected to represent the Operations unit. Our readers will recall that Maintenance employees are now part of the Operations unit. George Tillie and Louise Kohle represented the Offices unit. Staff Representative Lawrence Maier will serve as bargaining spokesperson.

The preliminary meeting on February 12 was uneventful as neither side tabled bargaining proposals. GSU members' bargaining proposals are being fine-tuned and will be given to management in the near future. Both GSU and SWP representatives used the meeting to discuss how the agreement renewal bargaining process can be used efficiently and productively.

GSU has proposed bargaining the Operations and Offices



The GSU bargaining committee met at the union office and reviewed their proposals prior to meeting the Company on February 12. (L-r) Lawrence Maier, Rod Peterson, Brian Suer, Louise Kohle.



collective agreements at the same bargaining table since all of the pension and employee benefits programs are the same.

Management has not as yet agreed to the "common table" proposal. Hopefully they will agree (Continued on page 5.)

Labour campaign focuses on workers' issues

The Canadian Labour Congress and the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour have launched labour's campaign to raise the profile of issues important to working people.

The labour movement is running a series of television ads which hit the air on Feb. 14. Under the banner "Our Province – It Works!", the ads focus on issues important to working people, such as

- healthcare for all,
- education and training for youth,
- a sustainable environment for our communities,



Above (l-r): campaign organizers Steve Torgerson – RWDSU and Nick Bonokoski –



CUPE are working out of the GSU office in Regina. Above left: Southern Saskatchewan is the base territory for GSU member Lily Olson.

- good jobs and worker rights,
- quality public services and Crown corporations.

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Move your mouse to



www.gsu.ca



Scholarship Form ► page 3.

Upcoming Events

- Bargaining will begin soon for GSU's units at the Saskatoon, St. Boniface and Moose Jaw AgPro Grain Locations.
- *Prairie School for Union Women (PSUW)* - March 16 - 20, 2003, Fort San, SK.
- SFL/CLC Annual Spring School - Echo Valley Conference Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle, May 4 to 9, 2003.



March 8

GSU News

■ Our Email Address
gsu.regina@sk.sympatico.ca

■ Our Web Page
www.gsu.ca

■ Our Fax Number
306•565•3430

■ Our Street Address
2334 McIntyre Street
Regina, SK S4P 2S2

■ Our Request
Please notify us if you change your address!

Union
made!



Sent to press February 21, 2003

Labour's world

Give us a break

The best, most productive workforce is a healthy, balanced, satisfied workforce - not one that's clocking too many hours, juggling jobs with hectic family schedules, or fearing another round of layoffs. Companies need to stay competitive, but "it's hard to be competitive if you have a stressed-out workforce," says Linda Duxbury, co-author of a new Canadian study, "Work-Life Balance in the New Millennium: Where Are We? Where Do We Need to Go?"

A similar study on work-life balance issues was done in 1991 by Carleton University and the University of Western Ontario researchers. Comparing results of the two surveys show conditions over the past decade have seriously deteriorated for many Canadian workers, leaving them more stressed, more depressed, less content with their jobs-and less healthy as a result.

Workers of both sexes and all ages are affected. *Resource Lines/WHSC/CALM*

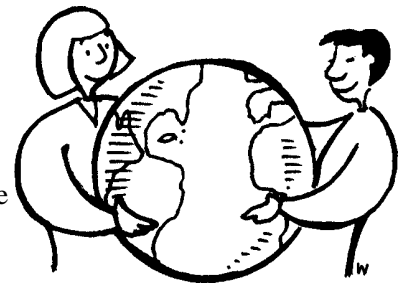
Wal-Mart wins by a landslide

This year the People's Choice Award for the company most connected with sweat-shop abuses in 2002 went to Wal-Mart, the overwhelming

favourite with 1,108 votes or 56 per cent of the popular vote.

Wal-Mart was cited for its bad treatment of its North American employees, as well as its contribution to the global sweatshop problem. Wal-Mart employees charge that the company requires them to work overtime hours for free, after they have clocked out at the end of their work day. The company has even stooped to profiting from employee deaths by taking out life insurance policies on its employees, payable to the company.

Among Canadian voters, Disney and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) virtually tied for second place, showing



how tarnished the reputation of Canada's oldest retailer has become over the past 12 months. In 2002, HBC was caught red-handed making clothes made for its Zellers stores in three sweatshops in Lesotho, Africa. When informed of serious labour rights violations in these supply factories, the company unfortunately cut and ran from the factories, terminating orders and thereby abandoning the workers.

This is the third year that MSN has sponsored the Sweatshop Retailer Awards. *Maquila Solidarity Network/CALM*

Congratulations to Local 3's Lily Olson

In 2002 GSU members were asked to submit stories or pictures for use in *GSU News*.

On Feb. 20, contributors' names were entered in a random draw, and Lily's name was chosen.

What did she win? Lily has won the opportunity to attend the CLC Women's Conference being held in Ottawa in June. Thank you to everyone who sent pictures, articles, or suggestions in 2002. *GSU News* appreciates the effort.



GET ALL THE FACTS ... and enter to win a GSU ball cap.



Find this 'Get all the Facts' graphic on GSU's web page (www.gsu.ca).

Then drop us a note, fax, or email telling us where the graphic is hidden, and your name will be entered in a draw to win a GSU cap.



GSU 2003 Scholarship Application Form

PERSONAL INFORMATION OF APPLICANT

Name _____
Address _____
_____ Postal Code _____
Telephone _____ Birthdate _____

I am applying for:

- Henry Lamontagne Scholarship Barry Melz Memorial Scholarship
 Bill Gilbey Memorial Scholarship

INFORMATION ON MEMBER, PARENT OR GUARDIAN

Name of Member or Parent or Guardian (who is a GSU member) _____
Place of Employment _____
Union Local _____
Job Title _____
Years of Service _____
Number of Dependents _____

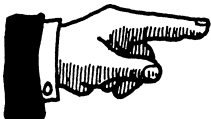
ACADEMIC DATA

School(s) attended _____
Extra-curricular and community activities _____

What university, college, technical institute, trade school or other public training institution are you registered to attend? _____

What course do you plan to take? _____
Length of course _____

Don't forget to include:



- 1.) a letter of reference from a non-family member describing how your participation in school, extra-curricular, and/or community activities make you a strong candidate for a GSU Scholarship; and,
- 2.) your essay on ONE of the following topics:
"Why is quality public health care important to working people?" or
"Why are Crown corporations important to working people?"
(Details on reverse).

Return this form to the Grain Services Union no later than July 1, by mail to 2334 McIntyre Street, Regina, SK, S4P 2S2 or by fax to 306.565.3430.

Grain Services Union is offering three \$1,000 scholarships in 2003.

Who qualifies?

The scholarship competition is open to GSU members and their dependent children who have not previously won. Dependent applicants must be 25 years of age or younger and studying at any public educational institution in Canada. For example, attending a technical institute, trade school, community college or university would qualify.

How are they awarded?

Applicants must complete the form on the reverse of this page. Scholarships are awarded based on merit - specifically defined as scholastic achievement, extra-curricular activity, and, most importantly, community involvement/volunteerism.

- All applications must include a letter of reference from an educator, employer, or community leader.
- Applicants must submit a one- to two-page essay on ONE of the following topics:
 - "Why is quality public health care important to working people?" or
 - "Why are Crown corporations important to working people?"

Scholarship winners will have excerpts of their essays reproduced in the *GSU News*. The winning scholarship applicants will be asked to submit a photograph and a short, written biography which will be published in the *GSU News*.

The scholarship categories are:

Henry Lamontagne Scholarship: Open to Sub-Locals 1A and 1B (SWP) members and their dependents only;

Bill Gilbey Memorial Scholarship: Open to Union members and their dependents in all locals based on financial need. Applications will be accepted on the honour system;

Barry Melz Memorial Scholarship: Open to Union members and their dependents in Units other than Sub-Locals other than 1A and 1B (SWP).

When is the deadline for applications?

The deadline for receipt of applications is July 1, 2003.

Who are the scholarships named after?

Henry Lamontagne was the president of Local 1000 (SWP) from 1987 to 1989. Henry is a fearless, straight-talking unionist who lead Local 1000 in many major disputes, including battles over hours of work.

Bill Gilbey was the GSU's first secretary-manager (the equivalent of today's general secretary). He led the Union from 1968 to 1977. As one of the thousands of young unemployed Canadians in the 1930s, Bill helped organize unions in the relief camps to better the appalling living and working conditions. His commitment to improving workers' lives was unrelenting, as his lifelong dedication to the trade union movement illustrated.

Barry Melz was president of Local 4000 (AgPro Saskatoon) from 1986 until his untimely death in 1997. Barry was a natural leader and devoted his time and energy to building his local and the Union.

GSU 2003 Scholarship Application Form on reverse.

This form is available on GSU's web page - www.gsu.ca

Arbitrator rules on layoffs and benefits

On Feb. 3 GSU received some bad news from Mr. William Hood.

Hood was the sole arbitrator hearing the union's grievance challenging Sask. Wheat Pool's decision not to extend group insurance coverage to employees who receive notice of long-term layoff.

Mr. Hood found that the collective agreements covering the Operations and Offices bargaining units are silent on the subject, but the group insurance policy excludes employees who are laid off and the employer's extension of the benefits to short-term layoffs did not bind management to treat long-term layoffs the same way. The arbitration hearing was held on Sept. 24, 2002, and Mr. Hood signed his award on Jan. 30, 2003.

"This is a disappointing decision and we disagree with its

findings," said General Secretary Hugh Wagner. "However, GSU has an opportunity to address the subject in upcoming agreement renewal bargaining."

"I do not accept management's reasons for the different treatment given to employees who are laid off



for a short term or a long term. The need is no less for the person on long-term layoff," Wagner said. "Thank goodness the collective bargaining process is about to begin."

Labour issues campaign

(Continued from page 1.)

"Our province - It Works!" is designed to initiate a progressive policy agenda and discussion of the issues among workers and others," said SFL president Larry Hubich. "Our sincere hope is that the political parties will not ignore 100,000 union members and their families."

Wage earners comprise the largest group in the electorate. And the labour issues campaign will help ensure that the issues of the 476,000 people who work for a wage in Saskatchewan will be front and center during this pre-election period.

For more information on the labour issues campaign email: prairie@clc-ctc.ca, or check out the website: www.tappedintolabour.org.

GSU and SWP bargaining begins

(Continued from page 1.)

and avoid duplicating or triplicating the bargaining talks.

Prior to the February 12 meeting, GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner wrote to Marvin Weins (SWP President) and Mayo Schmidt (CEO) to offer congratulations on the conclusion of the company's recently concluded debt restructuring negotiations. Wagner also suggested some general advice on steps SWP management could take to rebuild the business and bring profits back to the company. The text of Wagner's February 6, 2003 letter is printed below.

"I am writing to congratulate you on the successful negotiation of the restructuring of the Company's long-term debt. It was a trying time for all concerned, and GSU appreciated management's

efforts to inform employees during the closing days of the negotiation process.

GSU looks forward to working with your management team to improve the collective bargaining relationship and to assist with the ongoing success of the Company's business.

From our perspective it is important to rebuild the confidence of the workforce, since this is the vital link to maintaining and expanding business volumes.

It is my sincere hope that Company strategies do not include further cuts to the workforce. In my view, additional cuts and failure to recall employees presently on layoff would send the wrong kind of signals to the market and community.

We look forward to discussing a variety of strategies and methods to address the competitive business environment during bargaining for the renewal of GSU's collective agreements with the Company.

Once again, congratulations. We look forward to working with you toward a prosperous future."

Over the next months GSU members will be need to be determined, firm and united as the union meets the test of agreement renewal bargaining. Good collective agreements result from hard bargaining and a willingness to stand solidly on the side of working people. This is GSU's heritage and our future.

Periodic reports on bargaining will be posted on the GSU web site, carried in *GSU News*, and delivered at membership meetings.



Arbitrator rules in favour of GSU pension grievance

Arbitrator William Campbell has ruled in favour of the grievances of two GSU members.

The grievances challenged the restriction of portability options to members of the SWP/GSU Pension Plan who meet or surpass the rule of 80 when they leave Sask. Wheat Pool's (SWP) employ.

Since October of 1999, SWP management has denied departing employees who meet or surpass the rule of 80 the ability to transfer the commuted value of their earned pension benefits out of the SWP/GSU Pension Plan to another registered pension plan (if it permits) or to the member's locked-in RRSP or to the member's life income fund (LIF).

Relying on so-called "housekeeping" amendments to the Pension Plan made in October 1999, SWP management insisted that departing employees who meet or surpass the rule of 80 were required to take a pension or become a deferred pensioner. Arbitrator Campbell agreed with GSU's evidence and argument that the union's representatives did not agree to restrict member's pension portability rights or options.

When agreeing to the 1999 Pension Plan amendments GSU General Secretary Wagner wrote to company management and said,

"...The Union agrees to the proposed amendments with the understanding that substantive changes to the pension plan are not being made, i.e. the matters are housekeeping in nature."

In concluding his award Arbitrator Campbell said, *"... I further find, as indicated earlier, that the insertion of*

amended No. 10.02 into the pension plan is a substantive change to some of the members' rights thereunder. The Grievance is therefore allowed and I order that the Amended Paragraph 10.02 be struck from Amendment No.15, effective from the date of its insertion into the pension plan."

"This arbitration award restores options for longer service



employees who leave the Pool and that is good," said Hugh Wagner. "At the same time, if I was an employee leaving the Pool and I qualified for a full earned pension, I think I'd take the pension or, at the very least, I'd think long and hard before transferring my hard earned pension dollars to someone who is promising to double or triple my money."

"After all, a lot of people staked their retirement futures on buying EnRon or Nortel or stock even closer to home," Wagner said. "Can you buy a good retirement with those kinds of investments?"



GSU applies to represent new unit

On Feb. 12 GSU filed an application for a new certification with the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB).

The application covers the unit of feed mill employees working for Heartland Feeds in North Battleford, Sask. Prior to the application, a majority of the 18 employees signed membership cards in support of GSU. The feed mill is owned by CanGro Processors Ltd. operating as Heartland Feeds. CanGro Processors, in turn, is owned by Sask. Wheat Pool.

GSU's application will be investigated by a CIRB officer to verify the union's support. Evidence of support for the union remains confidential; the material is not revealed nor released to the employer.

When a union files an application for certification under the Canada Labour Code the employment conditions of

employees in the subject bargaining unit are protected by what is known as a "statutory freeze," meaning that employers cannot change things in retaliation to the unionization drive.

"The certification process is well understood by GSU and SWP management. I do not anticipate any great difficulties with this application," said GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner. "GSU already represents the employees at the Heartland Feeds Mill in Bruno and the CanGro employees at the Fish Farm in Lucky Lake. We welcome the North Battleford employees to GSU and look forward to working with them to bargain their first collective agreement."

Dale Markling led the organizing drive and will be working with the new unit on behalf of GSU.

Many people employed in the agribusiness sector are interested in being represented by a union. GSU members are encouraged to pass any leads to elected union officers or staff.