



G S U

N e w s

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2003 / Issue 2

Bargaining underway for most units

2003 will be a very busy year of agreement renewal bargaining for GSU members, officers and staff.

The union's collective agreements covering members working for AgPro Grain in Moose Jaw, St. Boniface and Saskatoon are open for renewal bargaining.

In addition to AgPro, the collective agreement with Dawn Food Products (Canada) Ltd. in Saskatoon and the two collective agreements with Saskatchewan Wheat Pool are subject to renewal bargaining (see the Unit 1 bargaining update in this issue of GSU News) as is the collective agreement with AZON Canada.

GSU's newest members, working for Heartland Feeds in North Battleford, will put the finishing touches on their proposals for a first collective agreement on May 25. It is anticipated that bargaining will begin in early June.

Bargaining with Dawn Foods began with the presentation of the union members'



proposals on May 4. Further meetings with management will take place on June 16 and 17.

Bargaining with AgPro in Saskatoon will begin on June 12 and 13. Currently bargaining dates are being arranged in relation to the St. Boniface and Moose Jaw locations of AgPro.

As readers will gather, GSU's bargaining calendar will be full this year. With the exception of

Dawn Foods and AZON, Sask. Wheat Pool is at the centre of most of GSU's bargaining this year. This makes it even more important for union members to attend and participate in GSU Local meetings. A united front of all GSU members is key to successfully resolving each set of contract negotiations.

Updates on bargaining will be distributed via e-mail and will be posted on GSU's web site as developments occur.

Sales of facilities affect GSU members

GSU members in two provinces are affected as Saskatchewan Wheat Pool sells off facilities.

On April 4, 20 union members working for CanGro Processors (formerly Hillcrest Farms) in Bruno, Sask., were told the feed mill where they worked was being closed down and put up for sale. They were also told their last day of work would be April 18 or 25.

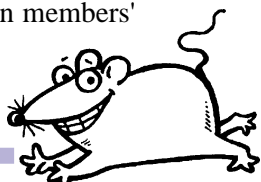
SWP is also selling its grain terminal in Wilson Siding, Alberta to Parrish & Heimbecker. The keys were handed over to P&H at noon on April 22. Eleven GSU members work for AgPro Grain in Wilson Siding.

"GSU has told SWP that we believe our collective agreements continue to cover employees, even under a different employer," said GSU staff rep Dale Markling. "If we have to fight to make this point clear, then we will do that."

GSU has filed an application with the Canada Industrial Relations Board to have the AgPro collective agreement continue to apply to the Wilson Siding facility.

GSU bargaining unit 7.5 president Doug Krentz is a member of a community committee looking to find a buyer for the Bruno mill. GSU's position is the buyer would be bound by the terms and conditions of the collective agreement.

(Continued on page 4.)



Move your mouse to www.gsu.ca



What is this scratch-and-win card I received? (Page 3)

Upcoming Events

- ✓ *GSU Scholarship deadline - July 1.*
- ✓ *SFL Occupational Health and Safety Conference - Regina, Sept. 21 - 23, 2003*



June is membership meeting month, and a dues increase is on the agenda!

Meetings notices were sent to all members on May 15.

Times and locations of all meetings are posted on GSU's web page.

GSU News

■ Our Email Address
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■ Our Web Page
www.gsu.ca

■ Our Fax Number
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■ Our Street Address
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■ Our Request
Please notify us if you change your address!

Union made! 

Sent to press May 22, 2003

Labour's world

Economy performs better when workers belong to unions

OTTAWA – The World Bank has discovered the union advantage. A new report from the powerful global organization says that “workers who belong to unions earn higher wages, work fewer hours, receive more training and have longer job tenure.” It goes on to state that union membership closes the wage gap between women and men and fights discrimination.

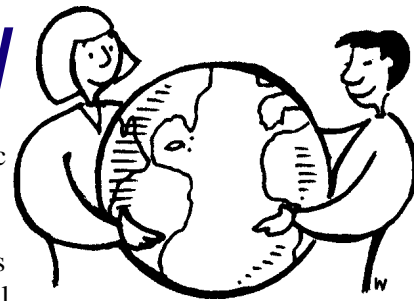
The report, which reviewed more than 1,000 studies on the effects of unions and collective bargaining, also found that improved labour rights can mitigate the negative impacts of globalization.

“The need for workers, employers and government to find solutions that cut poverty through both growth and better distribution of income is becoming increasingly urgent in an era of globalization,” said Robert Holzmann, the World Bank’s Director of Social Protection, who commissioned the report.

CLC President Ken Georgetti says the World Bank’s discovery of the union advantage should mark a turning point away from the corporate globalization model that has dominated trade talks and

international economic development for the past decade.

“Trade agreements and companies that fail to adopt basic work rights can no longer hide behind claims that they are good for the economy. Without respect for the rights of working people, including the freedom to associate and bargain collectively, they just aren’t good enough,” he said.



The report, entitled *Unions and Collective Bargaining: Economic Effects in a Global Environment*, is available from the World Bank web site at www.worldbank.org.
Canadian Labour Congress Communiqué.

We were there!

In late March, GSU members took part in an international day of protest against the war in Iraq. Shown here (left), Local 7 member Rick Eisnor.



There is an opening for a member on the GSU Defense Fund’s Board of Directors (BoD).

The BoD must be comprised of three Unit 1 members and two members from any unit. No director can be an elected representative on the GSU Joint Executive Council.

Members who wish to be candidates should submit their names to GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner as soon as possible. You can submit your name by email, fax or regular mail.

The deadline to apply is June 30.

Calling All Volunteers!



Unit 1 (SWP) bargaining continues

Head Office bargaining

Collective agreement renewal bargaining for SWP Head Office employees resumed on May 5, 6, 7, and 9 in Regina. Both sides reviewed their proposals in detail and discussed issues related to benefits, position eliminations, promotions and wages.

Management presented their proposal for the restructure of the current IT bonus system which the union committee studied in detail. While there are some parts of the plan that are acceptable, much work will be needed to make it fair for everyone. The union committee is preparing a response that will preserve salary levels for all IT employees. Their response will be presented to management before Head Office bargaining resumes on May 26 and 27.

Management indicated they will have their wage proposal ready for the next meeting. This should aid in moving bargaining past the preliminary stages.

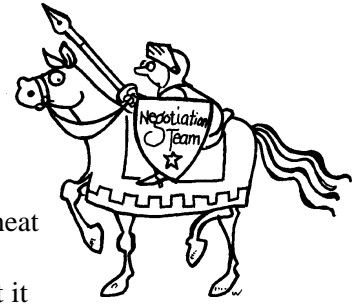
Operations bargaining

Country operations bargaining resumed on May 13, 14, and 15 in Regina. The lack of a management proposal on wages makes any progress difficult. The union committee spent considerable time drafting a layoff and recall proposal for presentation at the next set of meetings.

Management proposals for the virtual elimination of seniority in both collective agreements continue to overshadow talks. A careful examination of their proposals, and a lengthy explanation by management, confirmed the Union's fears. The Company proposes to destroy any meaningful seniority protection currently in place. Instead, members are asked to return to the "bad old days" and accept that management could

promote, demote, transfer, layoff and recall at will. Under Management's plan, employees could be forced to move against their will, be reassigned at a whim, and laid off without recall rights.

The Union committee has stated forcefully, and without hesitation, that seniority is the cornerstone of our agreements. The committee will resist giving management free reign to destroy the system that has helped



Sask. Wheat Pool far more that it has ever hurt them.

Operations bargaining will resume on May 29 and 30.

Remember to check the web page for bargaining updates.

What is this scratch-and-win card I received?

Enclosed with this issue of *GSU News* is a card developed by unions in Saskatchewan. It's based on the issues workers in this province say are most important to us.

It's designed to get us thinking and talking about what's important to us.



Graduating class of the first Employee Advisor Trainee program



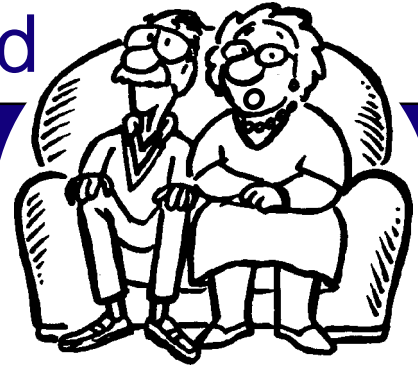
(L-r) Scott Jordison, Wes Pearce, Brian Janssen, Robert Sopher, Brian Suer, Rick Eisnor, Brent Pelechaty. (Not in picture: Lily Olson)

A new round of training will begin in October. If you want to apply, contact Adriane Paavo at gsu.paavo@sk.sympatico.ca, or at 306.522.6686, ext. 224.

(This course was funded by the SWP/GSU Training Trust Fund.)

Pension decision appealed

SWP Management is trying to overturn an arbitration decision on the SWP/GSU Pension Plan.



In February, an arbitrator ruled that GSU members can take their money out of the Pension Plan, even if they are at or past the 80-year rule.

Since October 1999, management had administered the Plan so that members whose age and years of pensionable service added up to 80 had to either take a pension benefit or defer receiving a pension. Two GSU members grieved, and the Union won the case.

On April 24, management asked a judge to reverse the arbitrator's decision. The judge's final decision will not be released for several weeks. But he did refuse management's request to block any 80-plus members from taking their money out of the Plan until that decision is released.

"If management wants to go to court, fine," said GSU staff rep Adriane Paavo. "But until the court

rules otherwise, the arbitration decision stands. If management prevents members from withdrawing their money from the Plan without any legal backing, they run the risk of being liable for damages."

As soon as the Union receives the judge's decision, we will post a summary on the GSU web site.

The next meeting of the SWP/GSU Pension Plan Trustees is May 27, and there will be at least one request from a member who has passed the 80-year rule to withdraw his money from the Plan.

The GSU has worked over the years to make the SWP/GSU Pension Plan one of the best private-sector plans in the country. Members who stay in the Plan are guaranteed a monthly benefit for their lifetime and then, in most cases, their spouse's lifetime.

"We don't tell members what they should do in their retirement, and neither should the company," said Paavo. "We took this grievance forward because, at the end of the day, members should be able to choose from as many options as possible."

GSU's pension trustees are Richard Deck, Bill Greer, and Anna Hilt.

Sales effect GSU members

(Continued from page 1.)

Workers at both facilities have access to layoff and severance provisions in their collective agreements.

The workers in Bruno will receive their severance which will be without prejudice to the successor rights if the facility is purchased and operated. For the workers in Wilson Siding the Company (SWP) has offered temporary employment at other locations for the balance of the 120 days notice.

This action has been grieved, as their positions have clearly been eliminated prior to the 120 days. For the employees who have declined the temporary employment the Company has offered to pay them the severance pay, but not the balance of the 120 days' notice. We are hopeful that the CIRB can produce a decision in a timely fashion so that the workers can eliminate some of the uncertainty.

Is your teen attending the SFL summer camp?



This year's camp runs from August 10 to 16 in the Qu'Appelle Valley. The camp offers a fun and safe environment where 13- to 16-year-old campers experience active learning based on cooperation, equality, social justice - and a lot of plain fun!*

Register early!

This popular camp fills up very quickly! Deadline for registration is June 16.

Draw for free registration!

GSU will make a random draw to cover the registration cost for one GSU camper.

To be entered in the draw, you must be the child of a GSU member, and registered and accepted as an SFL camp participant.



* For more information on the camp, contact the GSU office, or visit the SFL web page at www.sfl.sk.ca.

Congratulations to GSU member **Jennine Couldwell** who found the *GSU News - Get all the Facts!* graphic on the web page. For her efforts, Jennine will receive a GSU cap.