GRAIN SERVICES UNION (ILWU • Canada)

# GSU News

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2003 / Issue 3

# Members approve bargaining settlement

**GSU members working for Dawn Foods (formerly CSP Foods) in Saskatoon have approved a new three-year collective agreement by a majority of 91.67 per cent.**

*Unit 3 (Dawn Foods) chairperson, Bob McCloy.*

Bargaining for the new agreement began on June 16 and concluded with a tentative settlement reached in the early morning hours of June 18. A membership ratification vote was held on the afternoon of June 19.

The new collective agreement runs from February 1, 2003 to January 31, 2006. It provides for a general wage increase of 3 per cent retroactive to February 1, 2003 plus general wage increases of 3 per cent on February 1, 2004 and February 1, 2005.

In addition to the general wage increase, employees in four job classifications in the Wet Goods Plant will receive a special adjustment of 2 per cent to be added to the first, second, and third steps of their pay ranges. The premium for employees holding a Fireman's certificate will rise to 60 cents per hour above their current classification rate of pay.

*(Continued on page 4.)*

***Local meetings complete***

# Dues increase approved

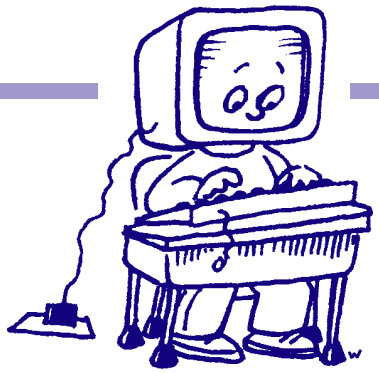
**The second round of GSU Local meetings under the union's new structure was completed on June 30 with the final meeting in Vegreville, Alberta.**

*(Above) GSU members at the Local 4 meeting in Yorkton. Membership meetings were held in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta in June.*

Each meeting heard a report on bargaining and Local issues and dealt with the Joint Executive Council annual report and union finances. Members also voted on a resolution to increase regular GSU dues to 1.75 per cent of regular pay.

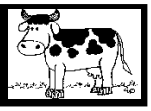
The resolution to increase GSU dues was thoroughly debated and approved by 82.6 per cent of the members who voted. The dues increase went into effect July 1.

*(Continued on page 3.)*



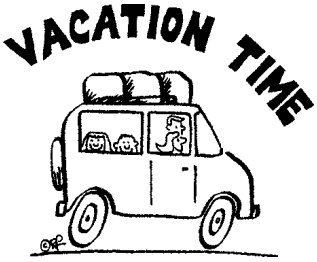
*Check the gsu web page at*
**www.gsu.ca**

**New agreement for Heartland members (page 4).**



# Upcoming Events

- √ ***Unit 1 (SWP) bargaining dates: Operations bargaining Aug. 14 & 15; Head Office bargaining Sept. 25 & 26.***
- √ ***SFL Occupational Health and Safety Conference - Regina, September 23, 2003,***
- √ ***Northern District Labour Council's School - October 18 & 19, 2003***
- √ ***SFL Convention - Saskatoon, October 29, 30 & 31, 2003***




**Have a great summer!**

## GSU News

■Our Email Address
gsu.regina@sasktel.net

■Our Web Page
www.gsu.ca

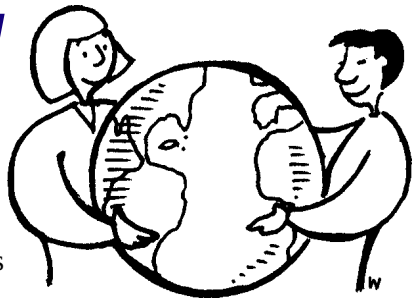
■Our Fax Number
306•565•3430

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

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

Sent to press July 16, 2003

# Labour's world



### Slavery for chocolate

Many of us like chocolate. But did you know that 43 per cent of the world's supply of cocoa beans is produced in the Ivory Coast, sometimes by child slaves?

Thousands of children are purchased from their destitute parents and forced to work 12-hour days, often for nothing more than sub-standard food and shelter. And when these children do something wrong, like fall down while carrying 50-pound bags of cocoa bigger than they are, they are beaten.

Aly Diabate, a 14-year-old former cocoa slave in the Ivory Coast told reporters, "The beatings were a part of my life. Anytime they loaded you with bags of cocoa and you fell while carrying them, nobody helped you. Instead, they beat you and beat you until you picked it up again."

Though part of his job was to pick cocoa pods – about 400 are needed to produce a pound of chocolate – Diabate had never tasted chocolate in his life. Learn more at www.globalexchange.org
*SUNSpots/SUN/CALM*

### Maquiladoras victory

Hundreds of workers fired from their jobs at the Duro Bag plant in Rio Bravo, Mexico have won a total of $185,000 in severance and back wages. The workers were fired by the Kentucky-based company after an attempt to create an independent union was defeated in 2000.

Despite several rulings by the local labour board and the federal labour tribunal that called on the company to rehire the workers or pay the full severance, the company resisted until pressure started to grow from an international solidarity campaign.

The Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, along with other labour and human rights organizations, helped build the campaign through Mexico, the U.S. and Canada.
*Labor Notes/CALM*

### Give us money or else

DiagnostiCare, an Alberta-based company that says it owns 120 private clinics in Ontario, last year demanded that three small towns in eastern Ontario provide subsidies to increase the clinics' profit margin to 23 per cent, or the clinics would close.

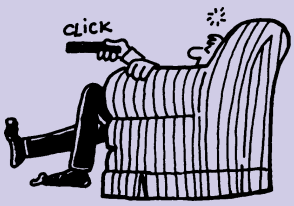
According to the Canadian Association of Radiologists, they got $12 million from the Ontario government – and closed the clinics anyway.
*SUNSpots/SUN/CALM*

## GSU's email addresses have changed to sasktel.net

Effective immediately, GSU's email addresses reflect the new 'sasktel.net' name, which replaces the older system name of 'sk.sympatico.ca.'

GSU email addresses are listed on the web page and printed below for easy reference:

**gsu.regina@sasktel.net**
**gsu.wagner@sasktel.net**
**gsu.maier@sasktel.net**
**gsu.markling@sasktel.net**
**gsu.paavo@sasktel.net**
**gsu.woods@sasktel.net**
**gsu.merk@sasktel.net**




Emails addressed to GSU using the old sk.sympatico.ca address will be forwarded to the new sasktel.net addresses for a trial period. Please note these changes to your address book at your earliest opportunity to avoid misdirected emails.

# Pensions a key topic in Unit 1 bargaining

**Support your bargaining committee!**

**Pension Meeting**

Unless Sask. Wheat Pool is willing boost its pension contributions by a significant amount, it will be difficult to bargain major changes or improvements to the SWP/GSU Pension Plan.

For a number of years, pension contributions have fallen short of the actual costs of plan benefits.

"Negative returns in equity markets and the loss of more than 1,000 GSU members working for Sask. Wheat Pool over the last four years have taken their toll on investment gains and the pension plan surplus," said GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner said.

"For example, the SWP/GSU Pension Plan Trustee Committee has decided it's not prudent at the present time to increase the plan's unit benefit above its present level of $61.98 per month per year of pensionable service," Wagner said.

GSU officers and staff met with Company management on June 23 to focus on GSU's proposals for improvements to pension benefits and options.

The Union is putting together a pension reform program to give GSU members pension options that suit their needs.

According to Wagner, one of the keys is to break the deadlock that now exists when trying to make pension-plan changes. SWP management and the Union each have three trustees on the pension board.

"Our job as union leaders and members is to convince SWP management that they should get out of the way when it comes to designing pension plans and the retirement welfare of union members," Wagner said.

**Layoff and Recall**

Union and Management committees also met on July 3 and 4 for head office bargaining.

The Union gave the Company a comprehensive proposal on layoff, recall, and position elimination issues.

We are asking for:

- the Company to provide more training,
- better seniority protection on layoff and recall,
- improvements in Supplementary Unemployment Benefits,
- more options for severance and layoff,
- better notice, and
- increased severance.

Management received the proposal but did not respond to it.

The Union's bargaining committees are frustrated by Management's inability to meet on a regular basis, and its insistence on bargaining head office and Operations separately.

Bargaining for Head Office is set to resume on Sept 25 and 26. Operations bargaining is set to resume on August 14 and 15.

**Dues increase approved** *(Continued from page 1.)*

Through the democratic processes of GSU, union members considered the future and welfare of the only organization devoted exclusively to their welfare.

All who participated in the Local meetings, regardless of how they voted on any issue, deserve the thanks of all members for taking the time to get involved.

The next round of local meetings will be held following Labour Day.

Congratulations to **Curtis Hanna**.

Curtis was the winner of GSU's random draw to pay the registration costs for a member's child to attend the SFL's summer camp for teens.

Curtis is the son of GSU member Wayne Hanna. Wayne works in SWP's head office.

# New retirement savings plan at Popowich Milling

**GSU members working for Popowich Milling Corporation (PMC) in Yorkton will soon have the option of enrolling in a group retirement savings plan (RRSP) with the Bank of Montreal/Nesbitt Burns.**

The RRSP option came into effect on July 1 and will be available to full-time PMC employees who have completed one year of service with the employer. PMC will match the group RRSP contributions of eligible employees with a minimum of 1 per cent of normal earnings to a maximum of 2 per cent. Subject to income tax limits, employees may contribute more than 2 per cent of their earnings. A minimum of 50 eligible employees must enroll in the RRSP to get the project up and running.

When PMC employees joined GSU, they did not have a retirement savings plan or pension plan. The situation changed as a result of bargaining for the second GSU collective agreement with PMC. And, while it is a modest beginning compared to longer-term GSU bargaining units, the new group RRSP is a platform on which to build improvements in future rounds of collective bargaining.

Congratulations to the members and the union bargaining committee at PMC for continuing the GSU tradition of rounding out the employment package to take care of the future as well as the present.

For more information about the group RRSP, union members should consult the employee information package soon to be distributed by PMC management.

## Members approve bargaining settlement

*(Continued from page 1.)*

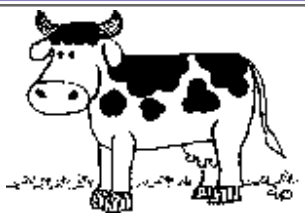
The settlement also provides for improvements benefit plans, overtime conditions, notice of job elimination and conditions entitling employees to severance pay.

The December 10, 2002 letter of understanding covering the employees' pension plan will become part of the collective agreement. In addition, the parties have agreed to jointly assess the feasibility and cost of adding a progressive disability benefit to the LTD plan.

**Congratulations to the members and GSU bargaining committee at Dawn Foods. They made quick work and good progress in the bargaining once it got rolling.**

**Members ratify new agreement**

## Improved wages, pensions for Unit 1.4 members



Despite the mad-cow disaster and the ensuing hardships for Union members at Heartland, the Company and Union reached a tentative agreement for a new collective agreement on July 9. The old agreement expired on July 31, 2002.

Members voted in favour of accepting the proposed agreement during membership meetings held July 14 and 15.

This is the first agreement bargained with Nilsson Brothers Inc. since they bought Heartland from Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. While there was a lot of ground to cover with the new employers, the talks went smoothly and, in the end, the tentative agreement will be good for employees and the company.

The contract provides an across-the-board increase of $70 per month retroactive to Aug. 1, 2002, a 2.5 per cent increase on August 1, 2003, and lump-sum payments of $200 in Oct. 2003 and $250 Aug. 1, 2004. Retroactive pay will be paid out in October.

The salary increases and lump-sum payments will increase the lowest wage rates in the collective agreement by almost 8.5 per cent over the life of the contract. The highest rates in the agreement will see a total increase in wages of 5.38 per cent.

On Aug. 1, 2003, the Company will increase its pension contribution to 5.5 per cent of the employee's wage, and employees will contribute 5 per cent. Current contributions are 4.57 per cent for both Company and employees.

Congratulations to the Union committee of Heather MacKay, Ken Selinger, and spokesperson Lawrence Maier. Thank you for your hard work.