



G S U

N e w s

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2004 / Issue 1

Organizing drive underway

GSU is engaged in a major organizing drive with employees of StarTek Canada Services Ltd. who work at the employer's Regina call centre.

The drive to organize StarTek employees into the GSU started in late November 2003.

StarTek is an office-services outsourcing company based in Denver, Colorado. Currently there are 19 StarTek centres in North America and Europe. None of them are unionized yet. The Regina operation employs more than 700 people who provide customer service to clients of AT&T Wireless in the United States.

Interested StarTek employees contacted GSU in mid-November. After initial discussions with these workers and GSU's Joint Executive Council, the organizing drive kicked into gear.

In the beginning of December, Deb Minion and Steve Torgerson were hired as temporary organizers to work in GSU's sign-up campaign.

"The organizing drive is on track," said GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner. "Information is being regularly distributed to employees, a data base is being built, and union cards are being signed."

According to Wagner, StarTek Regina employees want a union because of sick leave hassles, lack of flexibility, and work-related stress. (Continued on page 3.)



This billboard was one of three gracing Regina's Saskatchewan Drive in January.

Unit 1 (SWP) Bargaining

Conciliator appointed, Operations bargaining

Operations bargaining came to a screeching halt on January 19. While progress was made on a number of issues, Management refused to put a new wage package on the table. Their previous proposal (tabled in April 2003) was for 1 per cent, 1per cent, 1per cent, and 1 ½ per cent.

The Union Committee insisted on seeing what the Company had to offer. When they finally agreed to put their money on the table,



Management proposed a wage increase that was in some ways worse than the original. Besides cutbacks in hours of work, temporary employee time limits, and seniority, the Management team proposed no increases for 2003. They want the majority of employees to be satisfied with a 2 per cent increase in 2004 and (Continued on page 4.)



Check the web page!

www.gsu.ca

Scholarship forms available soon - page 2

Upcoming Events

- ✓ **Prairie School for Union Women** - March 14 to 18 - Echo Valley Conference Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle, SK.
- ✓ **GSU Biennial Convention** - April 30 to May 2 - Echo Valley Conference Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle, SK.
- ✓ **SFL/CLC Spring School** - May 2 to 7 - Echo Valley Conference Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle, SK.



March 8

GSU News

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Please notify us if you change your address!

Sent to press Feb. 12, 2004

Labour's world

Privatization squelched

Led by oil workers, unions in Uruguay gathered 625,000 signatures—a quarter of the electorate—and put an anti-privatization measure on the country's election ballot on December 7, 2003.

The people of Uruguay voted 63 per cent in favour of overturning the privatization of the country's government-owned oil company and to keep private competitors out of the oil business.

Labor Notes/CALM

Flight attendant delivers bundle of joy

Long-time flight attendant and CUPE member Charlotte Treddenick ended her 39-year career with a bang, by helping a woman give birth at 30,000 feet.

On Treddenick's last day of work in December 2003, she and 200 other people were travelling on a 17-hour Air Canada flight from New Delhi to Toronto when a passenger went into labour shortly after take-off. There was no doctor on board, so Treddenick and the other flight attendants sprang into action. They made a bed in the back of the aircraft using sheets, blankets and pillows.

"She was lying on the floor, giving birth, on landing," says Treddenick. "We had a beautiful, healthy birth and the little

lady was born right into my hands."

Treddenick says the entire aircraft burst into applause after the baby was born.

Paramedics met the flight when it landed in Toronto, and both mother and child are doing fine.

"It's a wonderful way to end a long career," she says, adding it's the best Christmas gift she could ask for.

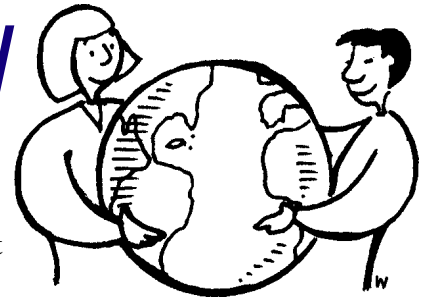
Because the baby was born on an Air Canada flight, she will automatically be granted Canadian citizenship.

FastFacts/CUPE/CALM

Rol-Land Workers win vote

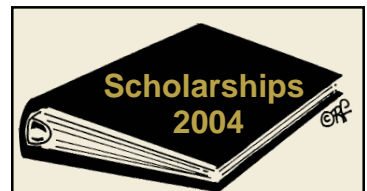
Mushroom factory workers in Kingsville, Ontario have voted overwhelmingly to join UFCW and challenge provincial laws that say they can't.

The historic Ontario Labour Relations Board-sanctioned vote was finally counted in



September following delays by Rol-Land farms, the \$50 million-a-year operation that employs about 270 workers. Hearings by the OLRB will now try to determine if the workers are eligible for UFCW Canada certification.

Directions/UFCW/CALM



The GSU Scholarship forms for 2004-2005 will be printed in the next issue of *GSU News*.

Forms will also be available after March 15 on the GSU web page at www.gsu.ca

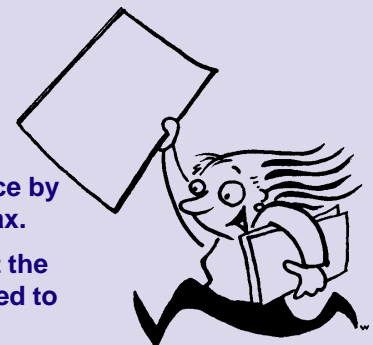
The deadline for receipt of applications is July 1, 2004.

GSU's Biennial Convention

will be held April 30 to May 2 at the Echo Valley Conference Centre in Fort Qu'Appelle.

Members may submit resolutions for consideration by convention delegates through their Local or directly to the GSU office by regular post, email or fax.

More information about the convention will be issued to members soon.



Employee Advisor trainees tackle pension plan issues

The Union is educating a second group of Unit 1 (SWP) union members from across the province to be Employee Advisors.

After completing the training, the Employee Advisors will serve as resource people for the members in their local areas. They will help answer members' questions and work with members to solve problems.

The Employee Advisor program is made up of three three-day sessions, one session per month.

The second session began on December 10, 11 and 12. Participants completed the Program's first module, learning basic information about the layoff procedure, job-elimination options, and other collective agreement rights.

Module two training took place January 26, 27 and 28. Participants learned basic information about the SWP/GSU Pension Plan: benefits, retirement and termination options, structure, and operations.

Module three training is scheduled for early April. During this final module, participants will focus on communications and problem-solving.



Session two participants.

Back row (l-r): Dave Kwochka,

Dwayne Nakrayko, Colinda Ray, Brad Lindahl, Rod Peterson.

Front row (l-r) facilitator Adriane Paavo, Carolyn Illerbrun, Mandy Kelln.

Goodbye to union staff member

Members and staff of Grain Services Union are saying goodbye and good luck to long-time staff member Adriane Paavo. Adriane has accepted the position of Education Officer with the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union.

Adriane joined the GSU staff in 1994. She also worked for GSU's Mozambique occupational health and safety project from 1990 to 1993, serving as a communications liaison and developing educational materials and methodology in Saskatchewan and Mozambique.

Adult education and program development have always been areas of interest for Adriane. We have



Adriane Paavo

witnessed and benefited from her years of efforts and training in this area, and we are happy she has found a position which allows her to showcase her talents.

We wish Adriane every success in the future, and we thank her for the commitment, dedication and friendship she has shared with us over the years.

Organizing drive underway

(Continued from page 1)

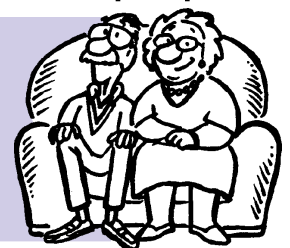
They want fair and consistent treatment by management, and employment security.

If you know a StarTek employee who may be interested in signing a union card, contact Deb or Steve at the GSU office.

More information about the StarTek organizing drive is available on GSU's website: www.gsu.ca.

Unit 3 members consider pension proposal

In a surprise turn of events, GSU Unit 3 members and UFCW P342P-2 members working for Dawn Food Products (Canada) Ltd. in Saskatoon are evaluating a proposal from the employer to have the two unions take over responsibility for the employees' defined benefit pension plan.



"We've raised this issue with the employer before but they've always refused. So union members in both bargaining units were caught off-guard when management made its proposal in late October," said GSU's General Secretary Hugh Wagner.

The two unions are evaluating Dawn Foods' proposal. The leadership of both unions' bargaining units held an information

meeting with Dawn Foods' management and the pension plan's actuary on December 11, 2003. Further meetings will be held in early 2004.

"At the end of the evaluation process, we will be able to answer union members' questions about the implications of management's proposals," Wagner said. "The final decision will rest with the members, as it should."

Defense Fund dues approved, Board meets

The Board of Directors of the GSU Defense Fund met January 15 to review the year- end results and assess matters going forward.



Board members met January 15 in GSU's Regina office. (L-r) Wayne Hanna, Mike Raine, Blaire Temple, Hugh Wagner, Brent Pelechaty, Michelle Houlden, Bryan Hammer.

Dues resolution passes

GSU members voted in favour of continuing to pay into the defense fund by a majority of 83.4 per cent of the members who attended and voted at the Fall 2003 annual meetings.

The resolution was thoroughly debated and a very strong majority favoured continuing the additional dues at least until the end of 2004.

"When we looked at our bargaining calendar, it was pretty difficult to say no to continuing the additional dues to the GSU Defense Fund," Unit 1 President Rick Eisnor said.

GSU Defense Fund Board meets

The Board of Directors of the GSU Defense Fund met in Regina on January 15. They reviewed the year end results and looked at the state of the fund going forward.

During fiscal year 2003, the Defence Fund Board of Directors advanced \$200,000 in credit to assist GSU in meeting its operating requirements. On January 15, the Board began assessing whether to treat the advance as an operating grant or as a repayable loan.

The Defense Fund directors also examined an initial projection of GSU's operating budget for 2004 and approved a \$100,000 line of credit. At December 31, 2003, the GSU Defence Fund had assets of \$2,900,000, not including the \$200,000 extended to GSU operations in that fiscal year.

The Board of Delegates of the GSU Defense Fund comprises Bryan Hammer, Michelle Houlden, Brent Pelechaty, Blaire Temple and

Wayne Hanna. GSU President Mike Raine and General Secretary

Hugh Wagner attend board meetings with voice but no vote.

Unit 7.5C (Heartland Feeds - North Battleford Mill)

Progress made, bargaining continues



The Union and Company met on January 27 and 28 to continue bargaining.

The parties were able to narrow their differences on vacations and temporary performance of higher duty. There was also discussion on hours of work, wage maintenance, seniority rights, trades training allowance, wages, and some of the miscellaneous allowances.

The Company is expected to consolidate their proposals for the next session which is scheduled for February 23 and 24.

The union committee comprises Randy Elias, President; Joe Beloin, Vice President; and GSU staff rep Dale Markling.

Union requests conciliator

(Continued from page 1.)

2 per cent in 2005. CSRs would get 3 per cent in 2004 and 3 per cent in 2005. AARs would see their salaries red-circled, with no economic increase for the three-year life of the agreement.

"Management seems to think employees should go without any increase for the first year of the agreement, while they rake in the bonus bucks," said GSU staff rep and bargaining committee member Lawrence Maier. "The Union Committee told Management representatives that their wage proposal was an insult. Employees deserve better treatment."

The Union has applied to the Minister of Labour to appoint a Conciliator to try to get the talks moving. GSU's bargaining committee told management they were willing to meet again if the Company had a more realistic proposal to make, with or without the conciliator present.

The Minister has not appointed a conciliator. No new talks are scheduled.

Unit 1 Head Office bargaining resumed February 4. The Union side continued to press hard for a fair TMSS plan and for a current wage proposal from Management. Union members met in Regina on February 11 to hear an update and assess the bargaining situation.