



G S U

N e w s

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2004 / Issue 3

Policy convention delegates take care of union business

Sixty elected GSU delegates, union staff and guests convened the union's 2004 Policy Convention at the rustic Echo Valley Conference Centre on April 30, May 1 and 2.



Above (l-r) Lana Sigurdson, Dale Hamm, Marlene Quinn, Bob McCloy (Unit 3 - Dawn Foods).
Below (l-r) Wayne Hanna, Unit 1A, Morgan Tiefenbach, Unit 1B (Sask Wheat Pool.).
See more photos on page 3.

Convention delegates received reports from President Mike Raine and General Secretary Hugh Wagner on current issues and events within GSU. The Convention devoted considerable time to reviewing GSU's audited financial statements for 2003, union budget estimates for 2004, and over 30 policy resolutions. Future issues of GSU News will focus on specifics of resolutions adopted at Convention.

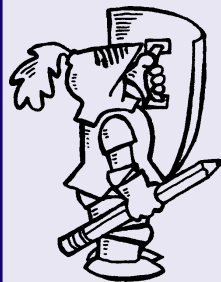
Solidarity greetings to the delegates were brought by Chad O'Neill (First Vice President, ILWU Canada), Chris Banting (Secretary Treasurer, RWDSU), Larry Hubich (President, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour) and Sandra Morin (MLA, Regina, Walsh Acres).

In setting policy for GSU delegates:

- voted to examine ways and means to make union participation more accessible for every member,
- dealt with procedures for electing members to the Defense Fund Board of Directors to ensure greater autonomy for the Board, and

- adopted resolutions on labour and social policy issues.

Convention delegates honoured union pioneers and recognized the service of a number of members, officers and staff at the
(Continued on page 3.)



GSU protects organizer and applies for vote

May and June had no shortage of buzz when it came to GSU's drive to unionize employees at the StarTek call centre in Regina.

On May 13 StarTek management fired union leader Frank Gribbon for alleged insubordination. Suspiciously the firing came right on the heels of Gribbon signing 18 co-workers into the union, in the company lunchroom, while on his meal breaks.

GSU challenged Gribbon's firing by filing an unfair labour practice complaint against StarTek. On May 27 the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board issued an interim injunction

ordering StarTek to reinstate Gribbon to his former position as a Quality Assurance Specialist in the call centre.

On Friday, May 28 GSU filed an application for certification with the Labour Relations Board (LRB) and asked the Board to conduct a representation vote of StarTek's Regina employees. The LRB will evaluate the signed membership cards submitted by GSU and require StarTek to provide an employee list,
(Continued on page 4.)



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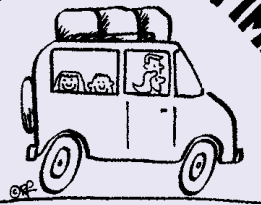
Upcoming Events

- ✓ *SFL Summer Camp - Fort Qu'Appelle, Aug. 1 - 7.*
- ✓ *SFL OH&S Conference - Fort Qu'Appelle, Sept. 12 - 14. Contact the GSU office to register.*



Did you vote on June 28?

It's
VACATION TIME



You've earned it and it's part of the deal in your union-bargained collective agreement. Relax, recharge, and enjoy your time off!

GSU News

■ Our Email Address
gsu.regina@sasktel.net

■ Our Web Page
www.gsu.ca

■ Our Fax Number
306•565•3430

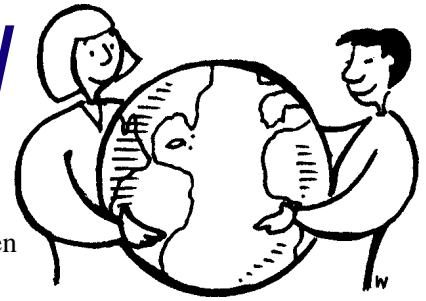
■ Our Street Address
2334 McIntyre Street
Regina, SK S4P 2S2

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

Union made! **CALM**
OF LABOUR MEDIA

Sent to press June 29, 2004

Labour's world



Lifetime ban

The Campbell Liberals have banned five women from the B.C. legislature for life.

The women were handcuffed, hauled away in paddy wagons, fingerprinted and thrown into jail. They were at the legislature for a meeting to try to secure funding for the province's 37 women's centres.

The B.C. government has cut \$1.7 million in annual core funding for the women's centres. Since then, at least half of the centres have closed or cut back on hours of operation and staff.

"This is nothing short of mean and vindictive," says B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union president George Heyman. "There is absolutely no reason why these women should be banned from the legislature. They are not a threat to anyone. All charges against them have been dropped. They did nothing wrong, and should have access to the legislature the same as any other British Columbian."

The centres provide women in B.C. living in poverty or violent relationships with a wide range of services including information and referrals, support groups, crisis counseling, job entry programs, legal aid

workshops, child care services, housing registries, stopping violence against women programs, clothing exchanges, food programs and advocate on behalf of women in need.

BCGEU/CALM

Marking Charest's one year of bad decisions

Thousands of labour and community activists took to the streets in April to mark the one year anniversary of Québec's Liberal government.

More than 10,000 in Montréal, 7,000 in Québec City, and hundreds of others in other towns protested one year of force-fed anti-union, anti-people legislation, arbitrariness and arrogance from the Charest government.

In one year, [Charest's] government has unravelled 30 years of social progress. From opening the doors to large-scale contracting out and privatization of public services to raising the fees for the provincial child care program to the wholesale restructuring of the health care system, the Liberals have shredded Québec's social fabric.

Protest organizers took some solace in the fact that the government seems to have slowed its pace a bit, perhaps in response to the strong public opposition to its policies.

CUPE/CALM



Fast facts about Wal-Mart

- Wal-Mart is the world's largest company.
- In 2002, Wal-Mart had a record profit of \$8 billion.
- Wal-Mart, by pushing out competition, eliminates three jobs for every two jobs it creates.
- Of the 10 richest people in the world, five are Waltons-the ruling family of the Wal-Mart empire. S. Robson Walton is ranked by London's

"Rich List 2001" as the wealthiest human on the planet, worth more than \$65 billion in personal wealth, topping Bill Gates.

- According to a Forbes study, Wal-Mart employees earn an average hourly wage of \$7.50. Wal-Mart states 70 per cent of its workers are full-time, but "full time" is 28 hours a week, meaning they gross less than \$11,000 a year.
- Only 38 per cent of Wal-Mart employees are covered by the company health care plan because most employees cannot afford the high premiums.

Information source: www.wal-town.com and CALM

Operations, Office, Maintenance members say 'yes' to tentative settlements

GSU's bargaining calendar has lightened considerably with two settlements.

GSU Bargaining Unit 1A SWP Operations, Maintenance

The Unit 1A bargaining committee capped off 15 months of bargaining with a tentative agreement on April 16, 2004. In May members of Unit 1A had the opportunity to vote on their wages and working conditions at meetings held all across the province. When the votes were counted, members accepted the new three-year deal by a wide margin.

Elected members of the Committee were Rick Eisnor (Assiniboia), Carolyn Illerbrun (Shaunavon), Brian Suer (Humboldt), Rod Peterson (Melfort), and Brad Lindahl (Balgonie). Lawrence Maier from the Union Staff was spokesperson.

Highlights of the agreement include retroactive wage increases for all employees between 2 and 2.75 per cent for 2003, 2.5 to 2.75 per cent in 2004, and 2.5 to 3 per cent in 2005, depending on classification. Major improvements were made in pensionable service on layoff, severance pay on layoff, and benefits continuation on layoff. The Health Care Spending Account was increased to \$300 per year from Jan. 1, 2004 forward.

The old agreement expired on Jan. 31, 2003. At that time, the Union agreed to delay bargaining while SWP management dealt with their financial crisis. The talks were long and slow-moving when they resumed.

The bargaining committee grew impatient with the lack of progress and on January 23, 2004 applied to have a Conciliator appointed.

The Minister of Labour for Canada assigned Federal Conciliator Tom Hodges to try to help break the deadlock. Late in the evening of April 15, the two sides reached a tentative agreement with the assistance of Mr. Hodges, and signed the agreement the next day.

GSU Bargaining Unit 1B SWP Head Office

A large crowd of Unit 1B members met in Regina on June 10 to vote on a tentative agreement reached between management and the Union on May 21, 2004.

The meeting was held in the RWDSU Hall in Regina. Bargaining committee members George Tillie, Louise Kohle, and Staff Rep Lawrence Maier presented the details of the proposed memorandum, and members had plenty of opportunity to ask questions.



Unit 1A (SWP) members in North Battleford voted on the tentative settlement May 5.

GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner opened the meeting with a report on pension issues and the special committee to discuss the SWP/GSU Pension Plan during the life of the agreement.

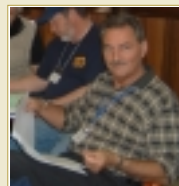
The new agreement was approved by the members in a secret ballot vote. After the meeting, pizza and beverages were supplied by the Unit 1B executive.

On June 16 SWP management representatives voted to accept the tentative deal.

Settlement terms state back pay will be processed within 30 days of both sides ratifying the deal.



(Top) (L-r) GSU Executive Committee members Mandy Windecker, Mike Raine, Hugh Wagner, and Brendon Sayers. (Middle) Mandy Windecker, (Unit 1.2 Western Producer), Sherry Bellamy (Unit 1.45 Bear Hills). (Bottom) Former staff member Walter Eberle.



GSU 2004 Policy Convention

(Continued from page 1.)

Convention banquet. Lifetime memberships in Grain Services Union were awarded to

Len Guigon, Dean Taylor, and Richard Deck.

GSU's officers play a vital role in the strength and success of the union.

Thank you to the GSU officers and convention delegates who attended the convention and represented the union members in their workplaces and Locals.

SolidarityWorks! at the GSU office

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour-sponsored **SolidarityWorks!** program gives young activists an insider's view of trade unions and the labour movement.

Ashlee Longmoore chose Grain Services Union as the host for her June 14 to 25 *SolidarityWorks!* placement.

Longmoore spent nearly two weeks working closely with GSU's Steve Torgerson and Donna Driediger, providing research assistance, contacting StarTek employees, and attending the Labour Relations Board hearing on June 16.

She also spent time with other *SolidarityWorks!* participants and attended labour events such as CUPE's Deer Park Villa picketline in Ituna.

Longmoore's placement marks GSU's third season as a *SolidarityWorks!* host.

"*SolidarityWorks!* connects youth with the labour movement and builds bridges for the future," said GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner. "It's often overlooked that the future of the labour movement is not in the present generation, but in the next and future generations."

Longmoore works at Safeway in Regina. She also attends the University of Regina and will begin her third year of studies this fall.



Ashlee Longmoore (second from left) joined other *SolidarityWorks!* participants on CUPE's Deer Park Villa picketline in Ituna on June 22.

GSU welcomes new staff rep

Donna Driediger

On June 1 Donna Driediger began working for GSU as the union's newest staff representative.

Donna has 12 years' experience in the trade union movement. Many GSU members will remember Donna from her prior Grain Services Union service as GSU's Secretary Receptionist. Donna also worked for the Retail, Wholesale, Department Store Union and, more recently, with MLA Sandra Morin.

After a period of familiarizing herself with GSU operations, Donna will be responsible for GSU Unit 1B (SWP office) and pursuing new organizing opportunities.



"Returning to the Grain Services Union is like coming home," Donna said. "I'm looking forward to working with GSU's current members and prospective members, protecting the rights of workers, and keeping the union strong."

Help us welcome Donna back to the union. You can reach Donna at GSU's Regina office or by email at gsu.driediger@sasktel.net



GSU protects organizer and applies for vote

(Continued from page 1.)

including specimen signatures for comparison purposes.

The LRB heard GSU's certification application on June 16. If a representation vote is ordered, each eligible employee working for StarTek will be able to vote by secret ballot for or against being represented by GSU.

"This is an interesting and challenging project," said GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner. "Our work is not over, and there is no guarantee of success, but we will continue to campaign fearlessly with the objective of convincing the majority to vote for GSU."

The union organizing drive began in late November 2003 and concluded with an application for certification on May 28, 2004. GSU is continuing to provide information about the union and talk to StarTek employees about the obvious benefits of being unionized.

If you know a group of workers who could benefit from belonging to a union, contact Donna Driediger or Hugh Wagner at the GSU office.