



GSU

News

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Information meetings held

Pensions issues top union agenda

Over the summer and into the fall, pension plan issues leapt to the top of the agenda for four GSU bargaining units. Widespread member interest and concern was sparked by an August 25 GSU report highlighting issues confronting the SWP/GSU Pension Plan.

The August 25 report highlighted current service cost and long-term funding issues facing the pension plan which covers slightly more than 2000 members and former members of GSU. Two rounds of well-attended union information meetings were held in September throughout Saskatchewan.

“We haven’t experienced this level of sustained member participation since the GSU strike at SWP in September 1994,” said GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner. “And, it is no surprise that union members are actively engaged in the pension subject. After all, retirement bread-and-butter issues are front and centre for a majority of members.”



GSU members in Regina and surrounding area attended GSU's pension information meeting on September 13.

Two of the bargaining units immersed in the pension debate are the Operations/Maintenance and Offices employees working for Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. These members are joined by former SWP employees working for Heartland Livestock Services and for the venerable Western Producer newspaper.

The common denominator for all four GSU units is the SWP/GSU Pension Plan, which is a jointly-trusted plan

established in 1981. The pension plan arises out of and forms part of the collective agreements between GSU and SWP.

Pension Issues

The immediate challenge facing active members of the SWP/GSU Pension Plan is solving the gap between the current employer/employee contribution rate of 9.14% of regular pay and the actual current service cost of pension benefits (Continued on page 4.)



SLRB hears GSU's StarTek applications

On October 6, 7 and 8, the Sask. Labour Relations Board (SLRB) heard two unfair labour practice complaints from GSU in relation to the union's effort to organize employees at the Regina call centre of StarTek.

The first unfair labour practice complaint centered on the May 13 firing of lead union organizer Frank Gribbon. GSU alleged that Mr. Gribbon was fired on account of his signing employees into the union. At the end of May, the SLRB

reinstated Gribbon pending a full hearing of the case surrounding his dismissal.

The second unfair labour practice complaint involved GSU's allegation that StarTek management (Continued on page 4.)



Drop by and visit us on the web.

www.gsu.ca

Scholarship winners! Page 3



Upcoming Events

- ✓ *GSU Defense Fund Board of Directors conference call - Oct. 25.*
- ✓ *GSU's Joint Executive Council Meeting - Regina - Oct. 26.*
- ✓ *SFL Convention - Regina - October 27 to 30.*
- ✓ *GSU membership meetings will take place in November! Watch your mail for a meeting notice.*



Happy Hallowe'en!

GSU News

- Our Email Address
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- Our Web Page
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- Our Fax Number
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Regina, SK S4P 2S2
- Our Request
Please notify us if you change your address!



Union made!

Sent to press Oct. 15, 2004

Labour's world

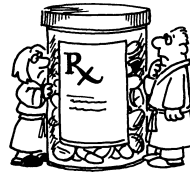
Saying no to Wal-Mart

Wal-Mart doesn't always get its way. Voters in the Los Angeles suburb of Inglewood last spring voted overwhelmingly not to allow Wal-Mart to build a super-centre in their neighbourhood.

Wal-Mart had planned to construct the huge store on a tract of land the size of 20 football fields, yet didn't see any need for an environmental impact study or public hearings.

Local residents voted 61 per cent to 39 per cent against the project.

CCPA Monitor/CALM

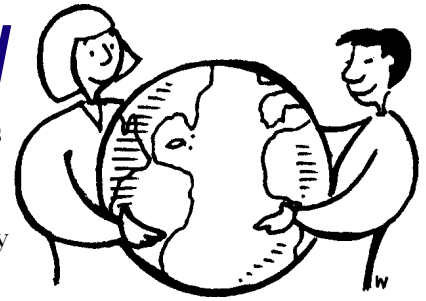


dwindling oil resources are generating conflicts and price increases, that is totally irresponsible."

CCPA Monitor/CALM

Bread and Prozac

Frustrated with workers' complaints about low-quality jobs, Susan Sheybani, a campaign worker for President Bush, recently asked, "Why don't they get new jobs if they're unhappy-or go on



Prozac?" Sheybani later said that she was "just kidding."

Nearly 1.1 million U.S. jobs have been lost since Bush took office in 2001. Many of the jobs created under Bush are in the service sector and other low-paying sectors of the economy.

LaborNotes/CALM

SFL Summer Camp rates A+ with GSU campers

GSU co-subsidized three GSU campers for this year's SFL Summer Camp for Teens. Alanna McPhail, Curtis Hanna, and Pearse Gribbon report they had a great time attending the camp from August 10 to 16 in Fort Qu'Appelle.

"We learned many things like ISMs and collective action," Alanna said. "I had a lot of fun, made lots of new friends, and I'm looking forward to returning next year."



GSU camper Alanna McPhail (right) enjoyed the SFL Summer Camp with her friend, Cheri Shewaga. Alanna's Mom, Brenda McPhail, works at Western Producer in Saskatoon.

Find out why the SFL Camp rates so highly with teens by watching camp videos on the SFL website: www.sfl.sk.ca.

Paris banning SUVs

Oversized, gas-guzzling SUVs will be banned from the streets of Paris over the next 18 months after the city council passed a Green Party resolution to that effect.

Under the resolution, SUVs will be banned from the Paris city centre during peak pollution periods and their owners denied parking permits. They would also be banned from protected areas like the Bois de Boulogne and the bank of the river Seine.

The Paris resolution says: "These vehicles emit almost four times as much carbon dioxide as more environmentally friendly cars. Some consume up to 24 litres of fuel per 100 km on an urban traffic cycle. At a time when

Congratulations

Melinda Morin

Recipient of the GSU's \$1,000 FNUC scholarship bursary.



Melinda is a student at the First Nations University of Canada College. GSU commends Melinda on her academic achievements and wishes her continued success in her pursuit of higher learning.

2004 - 2005 GSU Scholarships awarded

The 2004/2005 scholarship recipients were selected based on extra-curricular and community activities, references, and an essay. Excerpts from the winning applicants' essays have been reprinted below with the applicant's biography.

GSU's scholarship committee of Mike Raine, Mandy Windecker, and Brendon Sayers was faced with many applicants and difficult decisions. Thanks to the Committee, and thanks to everyone who applied. Good luck in your studies!

Bill Gibbey Memorial



Miranda Doetzel
Daughter of Pat & Teresa Doetzel

"I believe young people do not fully understand the importance that unions have played in their lives. They may be naive toward the benefits that unions can offer and should be educated on what unions have to offer so they are able to make a more educated decision.

Young people believe all companies were created to willingly pay high wages and offer benefits to their employees. What they don't realize is it was continued pressure from unions that rubbed off to other non-unionized corporations.

Miranda's father, Pat, has worked for Saskatchewan Wheat Pool for the past 28 years. He is currently in Macklin. Her mother, Teresa, works for Macklin Lake Regional Park.

Miranda received her schooling in Macklin. She is enrolled in the nursing program at SIAST's Saskatchewan campus.

Bill Gibbey Memorial Scholarship, Open to children of Union members or members in all locals.

Henry Lamontagne



Jessica Hanna
Daughter of Wayne Hanna & Shirley Dickson

"Young workers are being taken advantage of and they don't even realize it. Inexperienced workers have no idea they can do better because they don't have anything to compare it to.

Unions can involve young people by unionizing workplaces that most students work at. GSU has already started doing just that by trying to unionize StarTek. Once GSU is successful, the employees will see the difference it makes and begin to understand just how good unions can be.

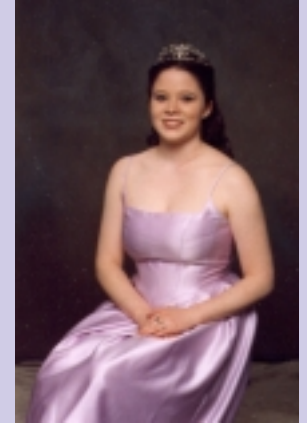
Youth want to participate. All they need is a way in."

Jessica's father, Wayne, works in Saskatchewan Wheat Pool's Regina Office. Her mother, Shirley, works for Canada Post and is a member of CUPW.

Jessica recently graduated from Campbell Collegiate in Regina. She is enrolled at the University of Regina studying Human Justice.

Henry Lamontagne Scholarship, Open to members or children of members of **Sub-Locals 1A and 1B (SWP) only**.

Barry Melz Memorial



Laurie Outram
Daughter of Glenn Outram

"Youth have had to deal with many anti-union sentiments from their employers. This sentiment portrays a negative view of unions to most youth, and many are led to believe that union dues are not worth the protection.

Most youth have misconceptions about the costs of unions, the purpose of striking, and usefulness of collective bargaining.

The more educated youth are about unions, the more potential unions have to be meaningful."

Laurie's father, Glenn, has worked for AgPro Grain in Moose Jaw for the past 20 years.

Laurie is enrolled at SIAST's Palliser campus in Moose Jaw where she is studying the business program with a major in financial services. Upon graduation, Laurie plans to work in investments or as a loan officer.

Barry Melz Memorial Scholarship, Open to children of Union members or members in Units other than **Sub-Locals 1A and 1B**.

GSU donates \$1,000 to striking RWDSU members

On September 30, striking RWDSU Local S-955 members marked one month on the picketline at Lilydale Poultry.

RWDSU Local S-955 members hit the bricks this summer when their contract negotiations with Lilydale Foods in Wynyard broke down.

A meaningful wage increase and much needed improvements in benefits are the focus as the union members strike to reach a new agreement to replace the one that expired in January.

(Right) On September 15, GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner walked the RWDSU picket line in Wynyard. He also presented picket captain Bill Stubbs with GSU's \$1,000 donation cheque.

Please take some time to join these workers on their picket line when you are in the Wynyard area.



SLRB hears GSU's StarTek applications *(Continued from page 1.)*

was the source of a closure rumour which played a major role in influencing employees on the question of unionization. From the beginning of its organizing drive in November 2003, GSU contended with the rumour that StarTek would close and employees would lose their jobs if the call centre became unionized. In late June, GSU received evidence which strongly suggests management was the source of the rumour.

In Saskatchewan, it is an unfair labour practice to threaten the job security of employees if they exercise their right to join a union. The SLRB heard GSU's complaints regarding StarTek's activities and is expected to issue a decision shortly.

GSU has asked the Board to consider ordering automatic certification or, failing that, ordering a representation vote after the union has been given a reasonable period of time to reorganize employees in a unintimidating atmosphere. The Union has also asked to recover all of its organizing costs.

Parties continue to meet

Following completion of the second round of GSU pension information meetings (Sept. 27 to 30) Company and GSU representatives met on Oct. 1 and Oct. 13. The discussions were cordial but frank, and the parties agreed to meet again with a view to focussing a mutually acceptable resolution. The next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 25.

Pension issues top agenda

(Continued from page 1.)

being accrued which is 11.6% of regular pay. The longer-term challenge is finding the appropriate means to sustain the pension plan which has seen its active membership decline by nearly 1,000 employees over the past four-year period. Since January 2000, the ratio of active members of the SWP/GSU Plan to retirees and deferred pensioners has been more or less inverted. That means one person is working for every two drawing a pension or entitled to a deferred pension.

Throughout the summer representatives of GSU and SWP met to examine the situation and to work on a solution. By the end of August, two tentative options were identified. Unfortunately, the path forward identified by SWP representatives would have shifted all of the burden for resolving pension plan issues onto the backs of currently-active plan members. The initial response of GSU representatives was based on a temporary remedy with the objective of maintaining the status

quo until interest rates recover and/or collective bargaining for new agreements begins.

Members attending the first round of GSU pension information meetings were surveyed as to their view of six possible solutions. Following the membership meetings, elected union officers reviewed the survey responses.

At the end of the day, the elected officers unanimously decided to recommend continuing negotiations with a view to finding solutions.

Since SWP and GSU have not yet resolved

Pension Plan funding issues, an immediate result is that the basic unit benefit will decline from \$61.98 per month per year of pensionable service to \$46.59 per month per year of pensionable service effective November 1, 2004. The reduction in the basic unit benefit only applies to pensionable service earned after November 1, 2004. The reduction decision was made by the SWP/GSU Trustee Committee in accordance with the revised 2002 actuarial valuation.

