



GSU News

When everyone does better, **EVERYONE** does better

Issue 1 - 2006

GSU Biennial Policy Convention begins March 3

On January 16, the call to attend the 2006 GSU Biennial Policy Convention was mailed to the Executive Committees of each of the union's Locals. Elected delegates, officers, union staff, and guests will gather at the Manitou Springs Hotel in Watrous, Saskatchewan, from 1:00 p.m. Friday, March 3, until noon Sunday, March 5.

The business of the convention will include:

- elected officers' reports,
- 2005 audited financial statements,
- union administration,
- organizing,
- members' resolutions,
- elections of officers, and
- commemoration of GSU's 70th anniversary.

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Special Insert: in this issue:
2006 Scholarship Form

Visit our web page
www.gsu.ca

Is there an issue you would like to have your union officers address at the GSU Convention?

GSU members can submit individual resolutions to Convention. Send your written resolution to the GSU office by February 24.



It is expected 70 people will attend and participate in charting the course the union will follow over the next two years.

Delegates will also elect members of the union to the Board of Directors of the GSU Defense Fund for a two-year term.

Union members play the key role in GSU's Policy Conventions by submitting resolutions for the delegates to consider and debate and/

or by representing their Local as a delegate. If there is an issue you want to have addressed, get involved. To find out more about the Convention and/or being a delegate, contact a member of your Local's Executive Committee or a GSU staff person in Regina or Saskatoon.

Wage loss and expenses for Convention delegates are paid out of the union's operating budget.

Local meetings now underway

Starting February 13, the first round of 2006 GSU Local meetings will be held throughout Saskatchewan with meetings in Alberta and Manitoba to follow.

The agenda for the meetings includes bargaining unit reports, updates on union administration, organizing prospects, resolutions to GSU's 2006 Convention, election of convention delegates and Local officers (where required).

Check your meeting notice recently mailed to you to determine the date and location of your Local meeting or check the GSU web site for all the Local listings.

Make sure to check out the GSU 2006 Participation and Action Contest (GPAC) on page 4 of this issue for details on how to become a winner.

Calendar of events

Write this down!

- **GSU Defense Fund Board of Directors meeting** - February 16, Regina.
- **Agreement Renewal Bargaining with SWP - Offices** - February 27 & 28; March 27 & 28; **Ops/Maintenance** - March 8 & 9.
- **GSU Biennial Policy Convention - March 3 to 5, Watrous, SK.**
Are you interested in being a delegate? Contact the union office for more information or to register.



We can't keep you informed if we can't find you!

Make sure GSU has your current contact information!

GSU News

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Labour's world

McDonald's should follow Taco Bell

What's the difference between Taco Bell and McDonald's? Taco Bell has agreed to work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to improve the wages and working conditions of the farm workers who pick the tomatoes that both McDonald's and Taco Bell use.

The CIW is a community-based worker organization whose members are largely Latino, Haitian and Mayan Indian immigrants working in low-wage jobs throughout Florida. McDonald's, however, continues to drag its feet and refuses to follow Taco Bell's lead. *LaborStart/CALM*

Wal-Mart caught using child labour

The French-language Radio Canada program Zone Libre has exposed Wal-Mart for using child labour at two factories in Bangladesh.

According to the one-hour program, children 10 to 14 years old were discovered working in the factories for less than \$50 a month, making "Simply Basic" and other Wal-Mart-brand products for export to Canada.

The everyday low prices Wal-Mart pays to suppliers encourage the use of cheap labour, including child labour. As well, suppliers are often forced

to subcontract parts of production to other factories to meet unreasonable order deadlines.

A just-released study carried out by MSN for the Ethical Trading Action Group (ETAG), the Transparency Report Card, gave Wal-Mart a failing mark of 30 at least partially because it does not have a staged approach to dealing with serious worker rights abuses.

The Report Card also criticizes Wal-Mart's code of conduct for undercutting internationally recognized minimum



labour standards by setting 14 as the minimum working age and sanctioning a 72-hour workweek. *Maquila Solidarity Network/CALM*



March 8 is International Women's Day.

Established in 1977 by the United Nations, International Women's Day celebrates advancements in equality for women and reminds us of the the challenges that remain.



Mindless Trivia

The 1970s brought us fascinating things such as disco, the first (and better) Star Wars trilogy, and that far-out tune "Kung Fu Fighting." Name the artist who sang this great one-hit wonder!

Get your answers to the GSU office by March 31 to be eligible for the next prize draw.

The winner of GSU's last Mindless Trivia question Darlene Luzny of the SWP Offices unit. Darlene correctly answered that the Cosby Show was quoted in our last newsletter. Way to go, Darlene!

Notice of Election

GSU Defense Fund Board of Directors

Are you interested in administering and investing the GSU Members' Defense Fund? **Apply now!**

Members wishing to serve as directors of the GSU Defense Fund are asked to submit their nominations to the GSU Regina Office by Friday, February 24, 2006.

In addition to indicating a willingness to serve on the Defense Fund Board of Directors for a two-year term, the nomination should include a brief biography of the member (e.g. place of employment; seniority; occupation; and union leadership experience, if any, as an elected officer, steward or delegate).

Defense Fund directors are responsible for the administration and investment of more than \$3 million set aside by GSU members as backup for collective bargaining disputes and defense of the union. Directors meet quarterly and communicate more frequently by conference calls and email.

Delegates to GSU Policy Conventions elect the Fund's directors from amongst the nominees. According to the Defense Fund bylaws, three of the five directors must be employed in one of the GSU bargaining units covering Sask. Wheat Pool employees. A director cannot simultaneously hold office as an elected representative to GSU's Joint Executive Council.

The current Defense Fund directors are:

- **Wayne Hanna** (GSU Unit 1B, Local 1 - Regina),
- **Blaire Temple** (GSU Unit 1A, Local 13 - Nipawin),
- **Bryan Hammer** (GSU Unit 1A, Local 6 - Unity),
- **Michelle Houlden** (GSU Unit 1.2, Local 2 - Saskatoon), and
- **Brent Pelechaty** (GSU Unit 1A, Local 4 - Kamsack).

Current directors are eligible to run for re-election. The term of office is two years.

Nominations can be submitted to the GSU office by email, fax or regular post.

Interested in applying?

Members wishing to serve as directors of the GSU Defense Fund are asked to submit their nominations to the GSU Regina Office by **Friday, February 24, 2006.**

It's hard to understand why saving money can be a bad thing.

Wal-Mart's many lawsuits, track record of discrimination, connections to China and reliance on billions in public tax subsidies to pad its bottom line, we must all keep a watchful eye on Wal-Mart until real and lasting reforms are made.



Watching WAL*MART

Hillary Clinton returns Wal-Mart cash

The Associated Press reports that Hillary Clinton has returned \$5,000 Wal-Mart's political action committee had previously donated to her "because of serious differences with current company practices."

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton gathered cheques from Hollywood friends, John Kerry's wife and even a former Republican congressman, but records filed Friday show she returned cash from an even older ally — Wal-Mart.

Clinton returned \$5,000 to the political action committee of Wal-Mart Stores Inc., a company with long ties to the Clintons dating back to their days in Arkansas, where Wal-Mart is headquartered.

Clinton campaign spokeswoman Ann Lewis said the money was returned "because of serious differences with current company practices."

The senator served on the Wal-Mart board from 1986 to 1992, and was close with the Walton family that created the nation's largest retailer.

But the senator signaled a new stance on the company's business practices in a speech last week, when she told the U.S. Conference of Mayors that the company should provide better worker benefits.

"Cities and states are saying we can't keep holding the bag here," Clinton told the conference, citing a new Maryland law requiring Wal-Mart to spend 8 percent of payroll in health benefits or contribute to insurance plans.

*Original story - February 3, 2006
www.wakeupwalmart.com*

Want more information? Visit www.wakeupwalmart.com for information on the high cost of shopping at Wal-Mart.

70 years of GSU is worth celebrating!

Get involved in GSU's Participation and Action Contest

2006 is the 70th anniversary year of Grain Services Union. The union's elected officers have selected encouraging participation as one of the best ways to commemorate the legacy of the founding members.



How to Win

To win one of the 20 GPAC prizes, members will have to attend sanctioned Local or bargaining unit meetings in person and submit an entry form on each occasion. It's that simple!

Turn up, turn out, tune in, and get involved. The real prize is a stronger GSU!

GSU's Joint Executive Council is launching the **GSU Participation and Action Contest (GPAC)**. The contest kicks off with the round of February 2006 union Local meetings and continues through the year until the conclusion of annual meetings in November/December 2006.

How will GPAC work?

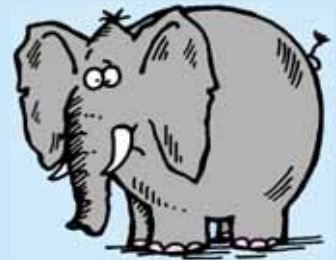
Each member of GSU who attends a general membership meeting of her/his Local will be entitled to submit an entry form confirming participation. The entry forms (one per member per meeting - no proxies) will be collected at sanctioned Local and bargaining unit membership meetings which will be held throughout the year.

Following the November/December round of Local annual meetings, 20 draws will be made from all collected entry forms. Members whose names are drawn will win one of the following GPAC prizes.

- The first four members whose names are drawn will each win a lap top computer.
- The second round of sixteen (16) draws will choose one member per Local to win \$250.

Unit 1A & Unit 1B (SWP) bargaining update

Pension Plan remains the elephant in the room at agreement renewal bargaining



GSU and SWP management representatives met to resume bargaining the renewal of the Offices collective agreement on February 2 and 3. The talks focused on agreement language issues with useful exchanges in relation to pressing necessity and family related leaves of absence.

Both parties indicated where the differences in bargaining proposals could be narrowed. GSU's bargaining committee identified significant wage increases, dental plan improvements and protection of employees from rising extended health plan premiums as being top priorities.

A lengthy discussion of SWP/GSU Pension Plan issues took place on the morning of February 3. And, both sides devoted February 14 and 15 to further efforts to bargain a

solution to the Plan's solvency deficiency which was recently estimated to be \$43.5 million.

SWP and GSU have been given 90 days' notice by the SWP / GSU Trustees to come up with a solution to the solvency issue.

"Things are coming down to the wire. The job of union members and retirees is to convince SWP management that it is within the Company's ability to support a remedy to the Plan's problems," said GSU spokesperson Hugh Wagner. "It is difficult to see how we can get to a settlement without a deal on the pension plan."

Offices bargaining will continue on February 27 and 28; Operations/Maintenance bargaining continues March 8 and 9.

Local 8 (AgPro Alberta /Manitoba) elected delegates met in Calgary on January 27 and 28.

The meeting included a shop steward training course designed to help on-site union reps deal with collective agreement and other workplace issues.

Delegates elected Shane Cockwill (CSR - Vulcan) to replace former Local 8 President Frank Schlageter, who chose not to run again. Brendon Sayers (CAR - Brandon), was re-elected Vice President.

Cockwill, Sayers, and Diane Beveridge (Lavoy) will represent Local 8 at the upcoming GSU Convention, March 3 to 5 in Watrous.

Are you interested in attending the convention as a Local 8 delegate? Contact Shane Cockwill, Brendon Sayers, or the GSU office.