



GSU News

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Issue 2 - 2006

SWP/GSU Pension Plan members, supporters rally

More than 600 GSU members, retirees, and spouses gathered at union organized rallies in Saskatoon on Saturday, April 29, and in Regina on Sunday, April 30.

The rallies were part of the union's campaign to defend the pension benefits of its members and former members who are entitled to a pension from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool/Grain Services Union Pension Plan (SWP/GSU Plan).

A draft actuarial valuation of the SWP/GSU Plan, as at December 31, 2005, indicates the Plan has a solvency deficiency (on a wind up basis) of \$38,835,000. And, members of the Plan gathered at the GSU rallies to reinforce their demand Saskatchewan Wheat Pool begin



making special solvency payments to the Plan to pay down the deficiency and secure the pensions of its current employees and retirees. *(Continued on page 3.)*

Unit 1A and 1B (SWP) bargaining enters critical phase

Collective bargaining between GSU and SWP to renew the agreements covering union members working for SWP in the Operations/Maintenance and Offices units is entering a crucial phase as attention is focussed on key monetary and working conditions proposals.

A bargaining meeting between union and management representatives on April 6 produced

some progress toward settlement of a renewed agreement covering the Offices unit. However, significant differences remain on general wage increases, premium sharing (extended health plan), family leave, seniority rights, flexible start times, and vacation thresholds.

Additional bargaining dates are being arranged. *(Continued on page 4.)*

In this issue:

- Wal-Mart undermines American security measures 3
- GSU 2006 convention recap 4
- GSU members attend shift work conference 4

Special Insert in this issue:
May 2006 Bargaining Update

Visit our web page
www.gsu.ca

Calendar of events

Write this down!

- **GSU Local Membership meetings - June 2006.** You are the union. Make time to attend your union meeting.
- **Agreement Renewal Bargaining with SWP - Offices - May 12, 2006.**
Ops/Maintenance - TBA.
- **The 2006 GSU Scholarship deadline is July 1.** Don't miss the opportunity to apply. Information is available on our web page at www.gsu.ca or by contacting the GSU office.



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

CLC 50th year stamp

Canada Post/CALM
As the national voice of the labour movement in Canada, the Canadian Labour Congress represents more than three million unionized workers. On April 20 Canada Post recognized this by issuing a single domestic-rate 51 cent commemorative stamp celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the CLC.



Montrealer Steven Spazuk created the stamp with photography by Marc Montplaisir. The stamp is one of visual symbolism, what Spazuk calls "an interpretation in photography. The illustration shows two hands holding the globe, with the Americas in view. One hand is masculine, the other feminine. One hand is white, the other black. Behind the globe, which is the logo of the CLC, is a tapestry showing the many benefits that unionized Canadian workers have received over the past 50 years."

The majority of national and international unions in Canada belong to the congress, including 12 provincial and territorial federations and 135 district labour councils.

June 21 is 'Aboriginal Solidarity Day'

Aboriginal people in Canada experience higher

rates of poverty and unemployment than the rest of the population—rates that are more than double the national average and even higher among Aboriginal women and children.

Aboriginal women and children tend to be more vulnerable to violence and abuse as a result of government policies that separated them from their communities and traditional support systems. These policies



included the withdrawal of the Aboriginal status of women who married outside their communities and the forced assimilation of children in off-reserve residential schools. June 21 is Aboriginal Solidarity Day and a time to re-affirm our commitment to solidarity with Aboriginal people in the struggle to improve their social, economic and political conditions. *Union Update/PSAC/CALM*

Attention SWP employees!

Did you know you can use your health spending account to fund employee-paid premiums to the health plan?

Need more information?

Contact the GSU staff rep for your Local.



Mindless Trivia

In 1980, Weezie and George Jefferson were 'movin on up... to the east side'. Not only did they move on up, but they acquired a cleaning lady. What was the name of the Jefferson's maid?

Get your answers to the GSU office by May 20 to be eligible for the next prize draw.

The winner of GSU's last Mindless Trivia question was Rod Braddock. Rod correctly named Carl Douglas as the singer of the one-hit-wonder "Kung Fu Fighting." Congratulations, Rod!

SWP/GSU Pension Plan members, supporters rally

(Continued from page 1.)

“The rallies were a powerful expression of the people’s support for the struggle GSU is leading on behalf of members of the SWP/GSU Plan,” said GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner. “The people have spoken very clearly and they are growing impatient. They are saying it is time for Sask. Wheat Pool to do right by the very people who worked and sacrificed for this Company.”

Wagner also said the unanimous view of the people who attended the GSU rallies was that the federal pension regulator, OSFI, should intervene to make good on its March 16, 2006, interpretation of the Pension Benefit Standards Act, 1985 (PBSA,1985) by ordering Sask. Wheat Pool to make special solvency payments to the SWP/GSU Plan.

“Pool management has repeatedly talked about finding a permanent fix to this situation for the Company, but anything they’ve offered leaves Plan members holding the bag,” Wagner said.

“This is the same Company that begged for a contribution holiday several years ago when it was in trouble,” said GSU President Mike Raine. “When GSU members and retirees approved the holiday, Company management said the assistance was greatly appreciated and would be remembered. It seems management has forgotten what the workers did for the Company.”

“The weekend rallies brought together hundreds of GSU members and retirees from every corner of Saskatchewan,” Raine said.

“Thanks to everyone who participated and played a role in making the events a huge success.”

“The rallies were a powerful expression of the people’s support for the struggle GSU is leading on behalf of members of the SWP/GSU Plan.”

GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner



Do you have something to say about the SWP/GSU Pension Plan?

Send GSU your thoughts, your message of support, and a picture of you and/or your family.

Help us keep the pressure on!

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

Truth hurts. Ask Wal-Mart.

Two weeks ago, the AFL-CIO released UNCHECKED. This report examines how Wal-Mart and the Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA) have systematically undermined America’s security by working to defeat or weaken new rules to make America’s seaports and supply chains safe from terrorist attacks.

In the past few years, Wal-Mart has:

- Opposed the introduction of anti-terrorist “smart containers” and electronic seals for cargo containers coming into US ports.
- Opposed independent and regular inspections of supply-chain security practices around the world.
- Opposed tougher rules requiring Wal-Mart to let Customs know what it’s shipping in and where it comes from.

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) is a voluntary federation of 54 national and international labor unions.

This story contains excerpts from Tula Connell's April 18 story on the AFL-CIO web page at www.aflcio.org.

- Opposed new container-handling fees to pay for improved port security.

At the Washington State Labor Council, David Groves writes: “Plain and simple, Wal-Mart and RILA are putting profits before American security.”

Shame on Wal-Mart.

Want more information? Visit www.wakeupwalmart.com

for information on the high cost of shopping at Wal-Mart.

2006 GSU Convention

Sixty delegates and guests converged on the Manitou Springs Hotel and Spa near Watrous, Sask., for the 2006 GSU Policy Convention.



From March 3 to 5, elected GSU delegates debated and reviewed union administration, union finances, labour legislation and public policy resolutions. The Convention adopted the 2005 audited financial statements covering the union's operations and reviewed the GSU Defense Fund.

In response to resolutions from union members, the GSU Defense Fund Board of Directors and Convention delegates endorsed allocating an initial amount of \$250,000 of GSU Defense Fund resources to support the actuarial, collective bargaining, communication, and legal expenses incurred by GSU in defending the pensions and rights of union members, retirees, and former union members who are members of the SWP/GSU Pension Plan.

Mike Raine was re-elected GSU President for a new two-year

term. Mandy Windecker and Brendon Sayers were re-elected Vice Presidents of GSU, also for two-year terms. And, Hugh Wagner was re-elected General Secretary for another two years.

Wayne Hanna, Blaire Temple, Bryan Hammer, Michelle Houlden, and Brent Pelechaty were re-elected to two-year terms as directors of the GSU Defense Fund.

As of December 31, 2005, the Fund had assets (market value) of more than \$3.1 million.

Top:
Convention delegates vote on a resolution.

Bottom:
GSU President Mike Raine challenges delegates to decipher his agenda notes.



A more extensive report on the business of the 2006 Convention will be carried in the GSU 2005/2006 Annual Report which will be released in late May.

Unit 7.8 members attend shift work conference

Unit 7.8 (Grain Millers) Chairperson Rod Varga and Vice Chair Alvin Soloway attended a two day conference on shift work.

The conference was put on by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, and was attended by Trade Unionists from across Saskatchewan. The educational was held in Regina. They examined topics from contract language to the effect shift work has on health and families.

Rod and Alvin reported that they learned a lot, and they are looking to incorporate the new ideas into the next round of bargaining.

SWP bargaining enters critical phase

(Continued from page 1.)

On Monday, April 10, GSU's Operations/Maintenance Committee met SWP management to resume the bargaining covering more than 600 workers in the SWP's Country Operations and Maintenance. As in the Offices unit, there is substantial ground to cover on wage increases, classification adjustments, extended health plan premiums, family leave, seniority rights, hours of work and vacations.

Some progress was made in closing the gaps between the two sides' positions on April 10 and April 21.

Looming large at both bargaining tables are unresolved differences between union and management in relation to the SWP/GSU Pension Plan (see the pension article, page 1).

"The major complicating issue in this round of bargaining with the Pool is the solvency deficiency in the SWP/GSU Pension Plan," said GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner.

"The open question confronting both union and management is whether it is feasible or sensible to settle the two collective agreements without a resolution to the pension solvency issue," Wagner said. "The SWP/GSU Pension Plan arises out of and forms part of the Operations/Maintenance and Offices collective agreements. Knowing that SWP wants to wind up the Plan rather than making the special solvency payments required under the PBSA, 1986, and knowing that GSU opposes a wind up because it would bring irreparable harm to Plan members, can a settlement be reached while leaving pension matters in the hands of an arbitration, or a court, or the federal regulator or a combination thereof?"

What do you think?

If you have an opinion about the direction to take in bargaining, let us know by mail or email.

Be sure to attend and participate when union meetings are called to debate and decide on these issues.

GSU Bargaining Unit update



Unit 3.0 (Dawn Foods)

The Issues: Wages, job security, and benefits. It is expected the pension plan's actuarial valuation report at the May 31 pension trustees meeting will reveal a larger solvency shortfall than previously anticipated. This may complicate negotiations as the parties bargain to resolve the deficiency.

Bargaining dates: The first bargaining session takes place May 10, 11, and 12. The previously scheduled April 11 session was cancelled by the Company.

Unit 4.0 (AgPro - Saskatoon)

Most Recent Meeting: The Company and Union bargaining committees met in Saskatoon on March 15.

The Issues: Member rejection of a proposed settlement and how to bridge the gap. Each side presented a revised position, but no agreement was reached.

This was the first meeting since Unit 4.0 members rejected a proposed settlement.

Upcoming Bargaining Dates: The parties are seeking conciliation.

Unit 4.6 (AgPro - Lucky Lake)

Most Recent Meeting: Bargaining talks broke off on May 5.

The Issues: Members of this bargaining unit met on May 10 and voted in favour of authorizing their bargaining committee to take action up to and including strike.

Upcoming Bargaining Dates: The union's bargaining committee is attempting to arrange another bargaining session with management.

Unit 5.0 (AgPro - Moose Jaw)

Most Recent Meeting: Proposals were exchanged and the issues were reviewed during bargaining on March 21 and 22. The Union bargaining committee met management on April 12 and 13 to resume contract talks.

The Issues: Union proposals include wage increases, benefit improvements, and classification adjustments. Management has proposed a five-year agreement, but GSU members are seeking a much shorter term.

Unit 5.0 (AgPro - Moose Jaw) - *Continued*

While management denies that they are having trouble attracting and retaining tradespeople, the Union committee hears a different story. There is a growing gap between supply and demand, with a shortage of qualified tradespeople willing to work for less than the going rate. Sask Wheat Pool is paying the price for the massive cuts Management implemented a few years ago. Ignoring the problem, and refusing to take steps to build a solid corps of trained and experienced staff will result in more contracting out, and huge costs that make increased wages look like a bargain.

The old agreement expired on March 31.

Upcoming Bargaining Dates: Dates are not confirmed, but the next bargaining session will likely occur during the week of May 22.

Unit 6.0 (PrintWest)

Tentative Settlement! A tentative settlement was reached on January 19.

Unit 8.0 (Mondrian Canada)

Most Recent Meeting: Members of the Regina printing and copying company met with Company representatives on April 11 to begin bargaining.

The Issues: The members list of proposals is short, topped by a wage increase and minor benefit improvements. The company, which used to be called Azon Canada has been reorganized, and is now called Mondrian Canada.

Members have had a good working relationship over the years, after a successful struggle to get a first contract. They are hoping to make progress and continue the task of keeping the Regina location the most productive and profitable one in Western Canada.

The collective agreement expired on December 31, 2005.

Upcoming Bargaining Dates: To be confirmed.

Unit 8.8 (AgPro - Alberta and Manitoba) Incentive Plan Bargaining Update

The Incentive Plan bargaining committees met on February 16 to discuss the issues from employees' perspectives. Union committee members were pleased with the frank discussion at the meeting.

The Company has indicated that while they are still considering modifications to the plan, they doubt that those changes will be effective in the current crop year.