



GSU News

When everyone does better, EVERYONE does better

Issue 1 - 2009



GSU is offering three \$1,000 scholarships for the 2009/2010 academic year.

A copy of the scholarship form and eligibility information accompanies this edition of the GSU News. You can also find the scholarship form on the GSU web page at www.gsu.ca.

GSU's 2008/2009 scholarship recipients are featured inside.

If you have questions about our scholarship program or you would like additional copies of the scholarship form mailed to you, phone the GSU Regina office toll-free at 1.866.522.6686.

Visit our web page
www.gsu.ca

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GSU requests vote in Manitoba

In an effort to continue first agreement collective bargaining and avoid more legal wrangling, GSU representatives have asked for a supervised in-person vote on the question of union representation in Manitoba.

GSU also invited Viterra to implement member-approved incentive pay and performance pay systems for Manitoba's operations and maintenance employees.

On December 11, 2008, GSU received a decision from the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) which removed Viterra employees in Boissevain and Brandon from the Manitoba country operations and maintenance bargaining unit. These former AgPro Grain employees in Boissevain and Brandon were returned to their former GSU bargaining unit where they will continue to be covered by the collective agreement they accepted in June.

The CIRB decision also referred the question of union representation for the remainder of Viterra's country operations and maintenance employees in Manitoba back to the original CIRB panel, leaving continued uncertainty.

When GSU officers reviewed the CIRB's decision they concluded that further legal wrangling will stall collective bargaining for a first collective agreement and lead to continued uncertainty for Manitoba based employees.

"In order to clear the air, GSU has asked the CIRB to conduct a supervised in person vote on the question of union representation," said GSU General Secretary Hugh Wagner. "At the same time, GSU

has consented to and invited Viterra to implement the incentive pay and performance pay systems for country operations and maintenance employees on the same terms as agreed to by GSU members in Saskatchewan."

"Since all of the leg work has been done, we think that Viterra employees in Manitoba should have access to the rates of pay and pay increases secured for employees in the collective agreements covering the Boissevain and Brandon locations and GSU's bargaining unit of country operations and maintenance employees in Saskatchewan," said Wagner. "This has been communicated to Viterra management and any potential legal issues have been removed by GSU."

"We will continue to make a strong case for union representation. In this time of great economic turmoil having terms and conditions of employment secured by a legally binding collective agreement provides greater stability and fairness for employees," Wagner said.

Updates on the requested vote and Viterra's response to GSU's incentive pay and performance pay system proposal will be available on the GSU web page at www.gsu.ca.

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Calendar of events

• Bargaining Dates

Bargaining Unit 3.0 (Dawn Foods)

Dates will be confirmed when the company has a HR person in place again.

• GSU membership meetings

Late February to mid-March.

Information will be sent to members when times and dates are finalized.

• Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's educational opportunities

Pensions at the Crossroads

February 4 to 6, 2009
Regina, SK

52rd Annual SFL/CLC Spring School

May 3 - 8, 2009
Saskatoon, SK

Contact the GSU office for more information or to register. More information is available on GSU's web page - www.gsu.ca.

GSU news

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Made and printed in-house by GSU staff members.

Printed Jan. 16, 2009.

Labour's world



Obama: Workers Staging Sit-In 'Absolutely Right'

CHICAGO — President-elect Barack Obama weighed in on behalf of workers staging a sit-in on the factory floor of their former Chicago employer to protest abruptly losing their jobs in December 2008.

Obama told a news conference that Republic Windows and Doors should follow through on its commitments to the 200 workers, who said they wouldn't leave the plant until they were assured they would receive their severance and vacation pay.

"The workers who are asking for the benefits and payments that they have earned, I think they're absolutely right and understand that what's happening to them is reflective of what's happening across this economy," Obama said.

The workers became a national symbol for thousands of employees laid off nationwide as the economy continued to sour.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson delivered turkeys, pledging support.

"These workers deserve their wages, deserve fair notice, deserve health security," Jackson said. "This may be the beginning of long struggle of worker resistance finally."

Full story available at www.myfoxwfld.com/myvoicedc.

The dangers of for-profit health clinics

A new report shows wait times are longest in areas where there is a large number of physicians working in for-profit, private clinics.

The report, *Eroding Public Medicare: Lessons and Consequences of For-Profit Health Care Across Canada*, details research findings of 130 for-profit health care companies across Canada. The for-profit health clinics are selling surgeries, MRIs and access to physician care.

"This report should serve as a warning. For-profit clinics are draining resources from the public system and jeopardizing the equality and fairness of medicare," says BHC researcher Colleen Fuller.

"Almost all the for-profit MRI/CT clinics have opened in the last 10 years, doubling in the last five," says Fuller.

The Report/HAS/CALM

PSAC members accept Canada Post's offer

Striking members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) working at Canada Post accepted their employer's final offer on December 23.

At issue was the company's attempt to replace employee sick leave and family-related leave with the employer's poorly designed Short Term Disability Plan.

Highlights of the final offer made by Canada Post are salary increases of 2.5% in 2008 and 2009, 2.75% in 2010 and 2011, a four-year contract, and a \$500 signing bonus.

Union members provide customer service and perform administrative, financial, technical and professional duties at Canada Post.

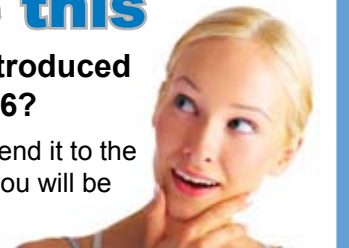


(L-r) GSU's Donna Driediger joined CUPW member Jeff Morin on PSAC's Regina picketline Dec. 3.

Riddle me this

What tiny treat was introduced to Tim Horton's in 1976?

Do you know the answer? Send it to the GSU office by Feb. 28 and you will be entered to win a prize.



Congratulations 2008/2009 GSU scholarship recipients

GSU is pleased to announce the 2008/2009 scholarship and bursary recipients. Thank you to the GSU scholarship committee of Carolyn Illerbrun, Jim Brown, and Mandy Windecker for determining our recipients.

GSU is accepting applications for the 2009/2010 scholarships. The deadline for receipt of scholarship applications is July 1, 2009. Early applications are accepted and encouraged. More information is available in the accompanying scholarship form and on the GSU web page at www.gsu.ca.

Brennan Rauert

*Henry Lamontagne
scholarship recipient*



Brennan is the son of GSU unit 1A member Deanna Rauert.

Brennan is attending the University of Saskatchewan where he is entered in a four year computer science program.

Meghan Rindero

*Bill Gilbey Memorial
scholarship recipient*



Meghan is the daughter of GSU unit 1B member and officer Eldon Rindero.

Meghan is attending nursing program at Lethbridge college where she is in completing her third year of studies.

Cheryl Ross

*First Nations University
of Canada bursary
recipient*



Cheryl is a mother of four and a First Nations woman from the Montreal Cree Lake Nation.

Cheryl is working toward an Indian Social Work and Indigenous Studies degree at FNUC. After graduation she hopes to open a program geared toward helping aboriginal youth and their families.



Members vote to continue defense fund dues

A strong majority of voters at GSU annual meetings in November and December voted to approve continuation of the additional union dues being paid into the GSU Defense Fund. Seventy-five per cent of voters approved the resolution to continue the additional union dues.

The Defense Fund dues will continue for another calendar year and will be voted on again at GSU annual meetings in the fall of 2009.

The main purposes of the GSU Defense Fund include protection of members' collective bargaining interests including payment of lockout pay or strike pay and defence of the union. Currently the additional dues are one percent of employees' regular pay to a maximum of \$10 per person per month.

The Defense Fund is administered by an elected Board of Directors who manage the Fund and decide on expenditures. Delegates to GSU's 2008 convention elected Bryan Hammer, Wayne Hanna, Michelle Houlden, Brent Pelechaty, and Blaire Temple as the fund directors for 2008/2009.

Members back at work after fish farm fire

On November 12 GSU members returned to their regular employment processing fish at the Wildwest Steelhead Fish Farm's temporary processing facility site.

On August 11 a fire destroyed the mechanical shop, the main office, and the processing plant operated by Wildwest Steelhead near Lucky Lake, SK. All three buildings were attached.

Employees were not laid off after the fire, even though no processing work was available until the temporary facility opened. Some employees chose to take other temporary employment while the remaining employees worked up to three days each week with the outside workers until the temporary facility opened.

"I talked to members on their first day back to work at the temporary processing facility, and they were happy to return to the processing operation," said GSU staff rep Dale Markling. "They appreciated the work share program the company and the union worked out, but they also said



GSU members were happy to return to a regular work day and a sense of normalcy at Wildwest Steelhead's temporary processing facility.

it was good to be back to their normal duties."

The Company plans to rebuild and be using its new facility by July 2009.

Management, GSU agree on worker incentive plan

New canola crushing plants and a number of high profile projects have made the job market in Yorkton very competitive.

Business is booming at the Grain Millers oat processing plant in Yorkton and management initiated talks with GSU to offer incentives to keep and attract workers.

In addition to a one time bonus payment of \$500 and an additional \$100 per year of service to all employees who have at least one year of service, there is a new attendance incentive that can pay up to 10 percent of an employee's gross earnings each quarter.

Payout of unused sick leave and

a profit sharing plan are also being discussed.

GSU members in Yorkton held their annual general membership meeting on Dec 10. A full slate of officers were elected for 2009 and the new executive is busy planning for the next round of bargaining and training courses for shop stewards in February.

Education and hard work for 2009

As we closed 2008, it was terrific to see the GSU members who braved the elements in November and December to attend GSU's annual general membership meetings. Your attendance at membership meetings ensures you have a say in how your union is run and that you elect local officers you

trust to represent your concerns and challenges in your workplace.

GSU officers and staff will be working hard in 2009 to ensure GSU members are well represented in their workplaces. We will soon launch a new representation format and other outreach programs to keep in touch with our members and help address

their workplace challenges.

We want to make sure everyone - from our newest members to our seasoned members - can easily participate in GSU and directly benefit from the wide variety of assistance that GSU provides.

If you have suggestions how GSU can better serve you, let us know.

We look forward to working with you and for you in 2009.