



GSU News

only YOU can make GSU your union

Issue 3 - 2012



Unionized workers make \$5.11 per hour more on average than non-union workers.

“Canadians shouldn’t fear unions, but should aspire to a union job.”
 ~ Canadian Labour Congress president Ken Georgetti.

Information and statistics as reported in the *BC Federationist*, Aug. 22, 2012.

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We still have two **Justin Bieber** tickets to give away to one lucky GSU member. Details inside.



Wait for “Legal Day One” continues, Locals 1 and 2

As “Legal Day One” in the Glencore PLC takeover of Viterra Inc. has been delayed time and again, many GSU members are growing increasingly frustrated and anxious about what the takeover means for them.

The looming but delayed takeover figured prominently in the Aug. 21 and 22 meeting of GSU’s elected board of delegates representing Viterra country operations and maintenance employees (GSU Local 1) and the executive bargaining committee representing Viterra’s Regina head office employees (GSU Local 2).

The questions of the moment are who will be affected by Glencore’s announced intention to spin off most agro and some grain handling operations to Agrium and Richardson International respectively, exactly what will occur, and how employees will experience the impact.

GSU has been asking the same questions since the takeover was announced in March. Despite initial assurances of

timely disclosure from Glencore’s representative, the response to date has been less than illuminating.

Through Viterra, Glencore has acknowledged its successor obligations with regard to unionized employees’ representation, collective bargaining and collective agreement rights. It has not identified nor disclosed how the announced spin-off of operations to Agrium and Richardson International will affect employees.

As the takeover process evolves, Viterra’s management has also, to date, been unable or unwilling to shed any light on the questions of most concern to employees.

Against this backdrop, GSU began bargaining amended and renewed collective agreements with the employer(s) on Sept. 12 and 13.

“GSU’s bargaining team is going into the process with the determination and strategy to get the answers and solutions to the questions employees are asking,” said GSU general secretary Hugh Wagner. “When we go to (Continued on page 6.)

New collective agreement reached, Local 6-Wildwest Steelhead

Congratulations to Local 6 bargaining committee members Candace Botham and Gorde Grande and GSU staff rep Dale Markling for successfully reaching a settlement with management on Aug. 30.

GSU Local 6 members voted to accept the proposed settlement during a lunch meeting that same day, the new agreement has been prepared for signing, and the terms of the new settlement will be implemented soon.

The inside scoop



GSU News

Editors

Hugh Wagner
Lynn Woods-Nordin

GSU Elected Officers

President Carolyn Illerbrun
Vice-President Jim Brown
Vice-President Mandy Windecker
General-Secretary Hugh Wagner

GSU Office Locations

2334 McIntyre Street
Regina, SK S4P 2S2

2154 Airport Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7L 6M6

Email Address

gsu.regina@sasktel.net

Web Page

www.gsu.ca

Fax Numbers

306.565.3430 Regina
306.384.1006 Saskatoon

Phone Numbers

866.522.6686 Toll-free Regina
306.522.6686 Regina

855.384.7314 Toll-free Saskatoon
306.384.7314 Saskatoon

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With a little help from you, we can do our job better. In GSU we try very hard to provide up-to-date information about the business of your union. In order for our communication efforts to be successful we rely on you—our members—for postal address changes, current email addresses and phone numbers.

Many people might assume that employee contact information is provided to GSU's administration by the employers. While employers do provide some information it is often not complete, entirely reliable, or accurate.

You can help us by providing us with your personal email address and making sure that the other contact information we have for you is current. Let us know when addresses and phone numbers change so we are sending the information GSU provides to the right place.

GSU treats the information you provide as strictly confidential. We do not release the contact information you provide to the union administration or to any other party.

Our commitment is to provide timely, relevant and transparent reporting on the business of your union. Help us do our job better.

Hugh Wagner
GSU General Secretary

Upcoming events

Would you like to attend the SFL Convention in Regina?

The convention will be held Oct. 31 to Nov. 3 at the Queensbury Convention Centre in Regina.

Your costs incurred for wage loss, travel, and accommodation for this education opportunity will be paid by GSU.

Contact your GSU staff rep if you are interested in attending or learning more.

Harvest Recipe contest

Send us your favourite fall recipe before Oct. 5 and you might win two tickets to Justin Bieber's Oct. 16 concert in Saskatoon.

Details are posted at www.gsu.ca



Overtime on Vacation decision - Viterra's court appeal hearing set for October 30

On Oct. 30 the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal will hear Viterra's application to overturn a Court of Queen's Bench ruling.

The QB ruling upheld an arbitration decision in favour of GSU's challenge of the company's unilateral changes to the calculation of vacation pay on employees' paid overtime.

Upcoming events are also posted regularly on the GSU web page at www.gsu.ca.

Dealing with difficult people. Why bother controlling our responses?

Canadian Tina Su left her six-figure corporate salary to post her in-depth articles on personal development on the popular website ThinkSimpleNow.com (TSN). She offers this advice about reacting to difficult people.

1. Hurting Ourselves

One of my favorite sayings is “Holding a grudge against someone is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.” The only person we hurt is ourselves. When we react to negativity, we are disturbing our inner space and mentally creating pain within ourselves.

2. It's Not About You, It's About Them

I've learned that when people initiate negativity, it is a reflection of their inner state expressed externally and you just happen to be in front of that expression. It's not personal, so why do we take it personally? In short: Because our ego likes problems and conflict. People are often so bored and unhappy with their own lives that they want to take others down with them.

3. Battle of the Ego

When we respond impulsively, it is a natural and honest response. However, is it the smart thing to do? What can be resolved by doing so? The answer: Nothing. It does however feed our ego's need for conflict.

Have you noticed that when we fight back, it feels really satisfying in our heads? But it doesn't feel very good in our soul? Our

stomach becomes tight, and we start having violent thoughts?

When we do respond irrationally, it turns the conversation from a one-sided negative expression into a battle of two egos. It becomes an unnecessary and unproductive battle for Who is Right?

4. Anger Feeds Anger. Negativity Feeds Negativity.

Rarely can any good come out of reacting against someone who is in a negative state. It will only trigger anger and an additional reactive response from that person. If we do respond impulsively, we'll have invested energy in the defending of ourselves and we'll feel more psychologically compelled to defend ourselves going forward.

Have you noticed that the angrier our thoughts become, the angrier we become? It's a negative downward spiral.

5. Waste of Energy

Where attention goes, energy flows. What we focus on tends to expand itself. Since we can only focus on one thing at a time, energy spent on negativity is energy that could have been spent on our personal wellbeing.

6. Negativity Spreads

I've found that once I allow



negativity in one area of my life, it starts to subtly bleed into other areas as well. When we are in a negative state or holding a grudge against someone, we don't feel very good. We carry that energy with us as we go about our day. When we don't feel very good, we lose sight of clarity and may react unconsciously to matters in other areas of our lives, unnecessarily.

7. Freedom of Speech

People are as entitled to their opinions as you are. Allow them to express how they feel and let it be. Remember that it's all relative and a matter of perspective. What we consider positive can be perceived by another as negative. When we react, it becomes me-versus-you, who is right?

Some people may have a less than eloquent way of expressing themselves – it may even be offensive, but they are still entitled to do so. They have the right to express their own opinions and we have the right and will power to choose our responses.

We can choose peace or we can choose conflict.

Did you know ...

GSU will calculate a commuted value of your pension benefit for you. We will calculate a commuted value estimate and explain the available benefits and entitlements you are eligible for as a member of your bargaining unit.

This service is provided to you as part of your union dues.

GSU contributes to success of Wounded Warriors' Weekend

Grain and General Services Union was a financial and in-kind supporter of the Wounded Warrior's Weekend. GSU general secretary Hugh Wagner spent a weekend assisting event organizers and veterans.

By Hugh Wagner

From August 24 to 27 I had the privilege of attending and participating in a unique community event organized by the good people of Nipawin and White Fox. The Wounded Warriors' Weekend focused on acknowledging the contribution of the men and women in our armed forces and the high price they often pay as a result of traumatic injury.

The Wounded Warriors Weekend began Aug. 23 with the arrival of most of the participating veterans at the Saskatoon International Airport where they were greeted by an honour guard and appreciative citizens. The arrival was followed by a cavalcade to Prince Albert where the veterans attended a dinner hosted by the Northern Lights Casino before continuing their trek to Nipawin.

The main focus of the weekend was caring and healing through sport fishing, golfing, music and community hosted events. Many Saskatchewan song writers and musicians donated their time and talents to make the weekend a success.

Equally important was the army of volunteers who made meals, chauffeured the guests, set up and dismantled venues, guided fishing boats on the Saskatchewan River and Tobin Lake, provided emergency medical services and most important of all, provided friendship.



(L-r) Comedian Bobby Henline and GSU general secretary Hugh Wagner had an opportunity to visit after Bobby's performance for the veterans.

Bobby Henline is an army veteran who was severely burned in Iraq in 2007 when a bomb hit his Humvee. After more than 40 surgeries, he decided he would try stand-up comedy and he was wildly successful. This "Well-Done Comedian" seeks to inspire and heal others with laughter and his story of survival.

It was moving to be a small part of this event and to witness the positive effect on the 114 Canadian and American veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts. Understanding that someone cares is a key part to recovering.

The event ended on Sept. 27 with a cavalcade through Wakaw where it was joined by 101 motorcyclists for the trip back to the Saskatoon airport.

GSU and ILWU Canada were among the first official sponsors of the wounded warriors' weekend. The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses joined the cause in July with the largest single sponsorship. Other unions and union locals lent their support as well. The role of labour unions was gratefully accepted and publicly acknowledged by the organizers of the weekend.

The weekend was not about glorifying war or endorsing particular foreign policies of the federal government. It was about acknowledging that armed forces personnel are the workers sent to carry out the policies of government and all too often they return changed and damaged only to be forgotten or to be given the run around by the same governments that put them in harm's way.

As with many good things that happen in our communities, the Wounded Warriors' Weekend was the product of many helping hands too numerous to name or list. Particular thanks and praise, however, are deserved by the principal organizers Blake Emmons, Jimmy Chute, Verda Hoppe and Darlene Donkers. Without their work the weekend would not have happened.

Wounded Warrior Weekend organizers still need your financial support.

The original budget for the event was based on attendance by 60 veterans. No one was turned away and 114 were registered. If you can help out, contact Hugh Wagner at the GSU Regina office.

Bargaining with Viterra begins

Bargaining to amend and renew GSU's collective agreements with Viterra covering Locals 1 (Operations & Maintenance) and 2 (Regina Head Office) began Sept. 12 and 13 in Regina. At the initial meeting GSU's bargaining committee exchanged bargaining proposals with Viterra management representatives.

On day two both sides clarified the bargaining proposals they submitted and provided an initial reaction to the proposals submitted by the party opposite.

"There are a number of major issues to be addressed such as hours of work and overtime rules," said GSU general secretary and chief bargaining spokesperson Hugh Wagner. "The issue of long hours and difficulties in balancing work with a person's family or private life was emphasized again and again by union members in

every corner of the province. We aim to make improvements for employees in this area of work and other areas identified during GSU's consultation processes."

"Then, of course, there's the Glencore takeover of Viterra and how it will play out for employees working in operations that are to be sold off," Wagner said. "Employees have a right to answers and options. It is our intention to get all of the facts on the table."

Bargaining resumes on Sept. 27 and 28 in Regina. In addition, bargaining dates are also scheduled for Oct. 16/17, Oct. 30/31, Nov. 14/15, and Dec. 13/14.

Updates will be provided regularly as the bargaining proceeds.

GSU's bargaining proposals are available on the GSU website at www.gsu.ca.

It's your contract.

Get involved in bargaining.

- Participate in developing the bargaining proposals which are taken to your bargaining table with your employer.
- Attend bargaining report meetings, vote on settlements, and support your bargaining committee as they work toward changes to secure and strengthen your collective agreement.

If you have questions about bargaining in your Local or about how bargaining settlements affect your collective agreement, contact your bargaining committee members or your GSU staff rep. All inquiries are confidential.

Expenses related to bargaining a collective agreement for your Local are paid for by your union dues.

You said what?

My boss is acting like a jerk. She's rude to me and she bullies me and my co-workers.

She isn't asking for anything unreasonable or anything that breaks the union contract. It's not really what she says, but it's her actions and how she says it. It's making working here difficult.

What should I do?



Questions, observations, and tips from GSU members

All GSU collective agreements have a clause called *Management Rights*. Basically it ensures that management has the right to run their business. GSU agrees that businesses should be able to manage their affairs.

Personalities play a huge part in management and there are many different ways to do the same thing. Like so many other situations in life, it's not necessarily what someone is saying to you, but it's how they are saying it.

There are several things you and your co-workers can do.

Communicate what you are feeling to your boss. If they are being rude or mean you have to

let them know. Give them the benefit of the doubt that perhaps they are not aware how their behaviour makes you feel.

Take good notes so you have a record of your side of the story in case things really go sideways. Keep a copy of relevant correspondence and conversations.

Talk to your co-workers. If you and your co-workers can agree on ways to address the situation and follow through independently, your manager may change the way he or she treats everyone.

Contact your GSU staff rep.

If you think they have crossed over the line, don't hesitate to talk to your staff rep.

There is never a charge for contacting the GSU office for advice. GSU reps will review your situation with you and they will never advocate on your behalf without your consent.

Win Rider tickets on the road with GSU's Riddlemeister

With a fresh crease mark down his face where the Elvis Sumo Wrestler sat on him, the Rid decided to hit the road again.

He cried his eyes out in Onion Lake, started a big divisive debate in Unity, and finally found himself on a bar stool in Waseca, which he pronounced Whiskey.

He was sharing some old childhood memories with a

patron who was too drunk to leave when the happiness Santa brings was mentioned.

"Don't talk to me about that guy. I hate him," the Rid stammered. "Ever since I got tangled up in Grizzly Adams' beard looking for a lost Tic Tac, I can't stand beards."

"What do you call a fear of beards?" asked the kid in the

corner playing VLTs. "Also, what time does school start?"

Since everyone knows when school starts in Waseca, tell us what a fear of facial hair is called.

Send us your answer by noon Oct. 8 and we will enter your name in a draw to win two tickets to the Oct. 20 Riders v. Alouettes game in Regina.

Good luck!



Congratulations to our 2012 GSU bursary and scholarship recipients

Detailed information about our scholarship recipients and copies of their essays are available on our web page at www.gsu.ca under the Member Services/Scholarships tabs.



Tonya Crowchild
GSU's bursary
First Nations
University of Canada



Courtney Jenkins
GSU member
GSU scholarship



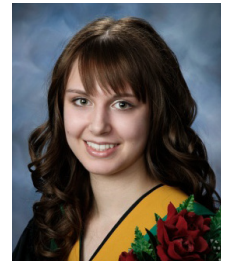
Trevor Johnson
GSU member
GSU scholarship



Keifer Mack
GSU Dependant
GSU scholarship



Bree Michalos
GSU dependant
GSU scholarship



Kelsey Walcer
GSU dependant
GSU scholarship

Locals wait for "Legal Day One"

(Continued from page 1.)

the bargaining table GSU will insist on upfront disclosure and respect for employees' legal and contractual rights by Viterra, Glencore, Agrium and Richardson International or whoever else might be in the mix."

On Sept. 12 GSU submitted

bargaining proposals to reinforce the right of employees to have options rather than being treated as parts of the assets that might be bought and sold.

You can review the proposals and follow bargaining updates on the GSU website.

Updates on Legal Day One will be posted on GSU's web page as they become available. Visit our website at www.gsu.ca.

Ridonkulous Street Slang

URBAN

DICTIONARY

successorize

An item of clothing or apparel used to make you look or feel more successful.

"Daniella used her fake glasses to successorize when going to work on Friday. Instantly her coworkers thought she looked smarter."

The urban dictionary is a little nasty, a lot funny, and not for the faint hearted.

You can check it out online at urbandictionary.com.



Got questions? Call GSU toll-free!
1.866.522.6686 (Regina)
1.855.384.7314 (Saskatoon)