



GSU News

Everyone does better when EVERYONE does better Issue 2 - 2013

Bill 85 The Saskatchewan Employment Act

You are making a difference. Saskatchewan's Workers are visiting www.Fairwork.ca, www.sfl.sk.ca/knowbill85, and www.gsu.ca to learn more about Bill 85. They are signing GSU's Bill 85 petition, sending letters to their MLAs, and asking the Saskatchewan government to SLOW DOWN and consult with the working people of Saskatchewan before passing Bill 85 into law.

If Bill 85 is worth doing, it's worth doing right.

Tell the Saskatchewan government to slow down.

Learn more. Send the government a letter. Sign the petition.

Visit www.gsu.ca to find out how.

Inside

Members Brag About It .. 3&6

Survey results surprise Local 5 (WPP) executive 4

Jaqueline Anaquod - GSU's 2013 bursary recipient 7

Members transfer to Richardson Pioneer 8

Joint Executive Council holds annual meeting

The annual meeting of GSU's Joint Executive Council (JEC) was held in Regina on April 17 and 18. The JEC is the elected board of directors of the union who serve as the GSU's governing body between biennial policy conventions of the union.

The JEC received a report on the Nov./Dec. 2012 membership vote which saw 82.5 percent of members who voted approve continuing the additional dues into the GSU Defense Fund for 2013.

In addition, JEC members received reports on union administration, union finances, and a thorough review of GSU's 2012 audited financial statements which disclosed a \$107,000 operating surplus for 2012 fiscal year.

In addition, the JEC considered and approved the 2013 operating budget estimate presented by general secretary Hugh Wagner. GSU's collective bargaining agenda and other current issues were reviewed.

In anticipation of the Viteria divestitures to Richardson Pioneer (ten unionized locations in Saskatchewan effective May 1, 2013) and Agrium Ltd. (numbers and date unknown at this time) the JEC established two new union Locals to provide for the democratic representation of employees who transfer along with the operations being sold to the new employers. The Local for Saskatchewan-based employees transferring to Richardson Pioneer will be GSU Local 14 and the Local for employees transferring to Agrium will be GSU Local 15.

The JEC concluded its business on April 18 with the adoption of the 2012/2013 annual report to the members, including GSU's 2012 audited financial statements.

The annual report and financial statements will be made available on GSU's web site soon. Members who wish to be sent a paper copy should contact the GSU Regina office.

GSU membership survey coming your way soon

The final touches are being put on our membership survey. Your opinion matters, so please take the time to complete the survey and tell us what is important to you.

Every GSU member who completes the survey will be entered in a draw to win two tickets to Paul McCartney's concert August 14, Mosaic Stadium in Regina.



If you are a fan of Facebook come check out our **GSU Canada Facebook group**. Ask for an invite to the group and we will say yes!

The inside scoop

When GSU members speak, we listen.

Nearly 40 GSU members attended our March 6 to 8 YOUR WORKPLACE educational workshop in Regina (visit www.gsu.ca and search YOUR WORKPLACE to learn more).

We asked our workshop participants to complete a survey and share their honest thoughts about their newsletter – *GSU News*. Members told us that they would like to see more pictures and read more stories in the newsletter about their fellow GSU members. They also said they would like to see a puzzle and some additional stories or information which hadn't already been featured in our Tuesday Morning Memo e-newsletter or on GSU's web page.

We listened closely and made the changes members asked for. The result is this eight-page newsletter. I think we were able to incorporate the wishes of the members, and – as always – the members were right and the changes they suggested were positive.

We welcome your suggestions, whether they are about the newsletter, membership meetings, or any aspect of GSU and the work it does for members. If you have suggestions on changes you would like to see or thoughts about how GSU can best serve its members I hope you will share your ideas in our upcoming membership survey. Your opinion really does matter and it will be taken into consideration going forward.



Hugh Wagner, GSU general secretary

Who is GSU?

GSU represents working people across Western Canada. We are headquartered in Regina with a second office in Saskatoon.

We represent a true cross section of the workforce. Our members work in elevators, offices, factories, barns, laboratories, and even lakes.

Join GSU!

If you know workers who may benefit from joining GSU let us know.



GSU News

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Upcoming events

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| June 9-13 | Prairie School for Union Women
Waskesiu Lake, SK
Call GSU for information. |
| July 1 | GSU scholarship deadline.
Visit www.gsu.ca for details and forms. |
| August 4-10 | SFL Summer Camp 2013
Calling Lakes Centre
Fort Qu'Appelle, SK
Don't miss out! Register Early! |

Information on these events and other upcoming events is posted on GSU web page: www.gsu.ca.

What's your story? Brag about it and you could win Grey Cup tickets

Robin Taylor

HR Accounting - Viterra
Regina, SK

"Since I didn't have to take the picture ... I'm actually in it!

The co-ed soccer team I play on (Wildfire) won the A-side Div 4 final on the [March 16 and 17] weekend ... and I got the winning goal!

It squeezed right between the keeper's feet. Must have been our name change this season ... we used to be called the Wannabe's.

The ladies team I played with was knocked out in the semi finals, but we still had fun!"



Robin is in the middle row, second player from the left.



Robin will be entered in our draw for two 2013 Grey Cup tickets.

Do you have something you would like to brag about? Send us your picture and a short story and we will enter you in

our draw for two Grey Cup tickets.

Full details are available at www.gsu.ca.

Bangladesh's non-union workers powerless to act on problems

Over 370 non-union garment workers were killed when an eight-story building housing five textile factories collapsed in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on April 24. 3,100 people are estimated to have worked in the Rana Plaza building.

Large structural cracks were reported by investigators and workers who were in the Rana Plaza the day before the building collapsed. Media reports say shops and a bank branch on the lower floors immediately closed, but garment factory workers on the upper floors were told to work or risk losing a month's wages (minimum wage is less than \$40 a month).

Factory and building owners at Rana Plaza have been taken

into custody and will face allegations of negligence, illegal construction, and persuading workers to enter a dangerous building, but that will do little to comfort injured workers and the families of the workers who lost their lives.

There is a strong anti-union environment in the Dhaka factory area. Media reports state that none of the factory workers in the Rana Plaza were unionized. Weak enforcement of labor laws in Bangladesh also contributes to the problem by enabling employers to harass and intimidate workers

and the union organizers who attempt to form unions.

Companies who employ sweatshop workers and ship their manufacturing overseas do so at the risk of workers. They avoid unionization, protective regulations, and employee rights in favour of profits and cheap labour.

It is tragic that factory workers did not have the power to act on the warning signs they had spotted. If they were union members—with the ability to report and refuse dangerous work—things may have been different.

How can you tell if your shirt was made in a sweatshop? Visit www.gsu.ca to learn more.

Local 5 (WPP) executive surprised by survey results

What started out as a survey to prepare for bargaining became much more in GSU Local 5 (Western Producer).

GSU members in Local 5 are no strangers to the union surveys which canvass their membership. This spring Local president Michelle Houlden and vice-president Kim Quinton put together several questions in a survey to find out what members were seeking in the upcoming round of contract negotiations.

"We included a few additional questions in our 2013 survey and they took on a life of their own," Michelle reported. "We asked members to identify problems in the workplace and how they would solve them. The responses were rather eye-opening."

Michelle had a similar experience with a survey her local conducted before entering contract negotiations in 2010.

"Our members had concerns with building maintenance. In fact, it was a top priority," Michelle said. "We would never have known how much the appearance of the building was affecting our members if we hadn't provided them with an opportunity to tell us."



(Above, left) Michelle Houlden is GSU's elected president in Local 5 where she works as Western Producer's art director and graphic artist. Regular readers of the Western Producer will recognize Michelle's handiwork and clever graphics throughout the paper and GSU promotional items - such as the GSU logo and the t-shirt designs in the story below.



(Above, right) When he's not hand-forging steel knives and making custom leather knife cases, Local 5 vice-president Kim Quinton provides IT troubleshooting for the Western Producer and other newspapers owned by its parent company, Glacier Media.

Houlden and the local executive were able to take the concerns to management, and that resulted in positive changes in the office.

"Management was very receptive. They freshened up the cafeteria, replaced some dated carpet, and did some other housekeeping which made the office a better place to work in and to meet with our clients," Michelle noted. "Members were pleased with the changes and they appreciated that management

acted on their concerns."

Michelle and Kim have already met with management to share some of the ideas and concerns members raised in the local's March 2013 survey. Other ideas will be added to their bargaining package when they meet with the company later in the year.

"Management seems interested in our suggestions, so I am optimistic that changes may be coming to address even more of the problems that GSU members identified."

We're so excited! New GSU t-shirts arrive mid-May

Thank you to our GSU members who submitted t-shirts designs and who let us know what they would like to print on our new line of t-shirts. These are the designs you told us you would like to wear.

Our order is at the printers and our new shirts should be in our hands by mid-May.

Watch www.gsu.ca, your **GSU Tuesday Morning Memo**, and **GSU News** for opportunities to order or win a shirt.



Court of Appeal rules on Essential Services Act, amendments to Sask. Trade Union Act

An overview:

- Two laws were passed five years ago:
 - o Bill 5 - The Essential Services Law limits the number of public sector workers — such as health care workers and highway workers — who can strike and sets out a process to determine which workers are covered.
 - o Bill 6 included changes to the Trade Union Act that make it tougher for workers to form unions.
- On April 26, 2013, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal overruled a lower court's decision and upheld these two key pieces of the Saskatchewan provincial government's labour legislation with a ruling that the province's Essential Services Act and its changes to the Trade Union Act are constitutional.
- The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) had been fighting to strike down both pieces of legislation, saying workers' rights were curtailed in a way which violated the Constitution.
- The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour has 60 days to apply for an appeal with the Supreme Court of Canada.

On April 26 the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal released its decision/ ruling with regard to cross appeals by the Government of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour et al (SFL), of the February 2012 decision by Court of Queen's Bench Justice Dennis Ball who upheld the legality of the 2008 amendments to the Trade Union Act, but struck down the government's Public Service Essential Services Act (PSESA).

In striking down the 2008 PSESA, Justice Ball found that the legislation was an unsupportable intrusion on the right of workers to strike which he found to be part of the freedom of association which is protected by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Different aspects of Justice Ball's decision were appealed to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal which heard arguments from the parties and intervenors in Nov. 2012.

The much anticipated Court of Appeal decision was pretty much of a draw on the issue of the right to strike. Even though the five-judge appeal court panel did not side with

Justice Ball's view that the right to strike is protected by the Charter, they left the matter open to an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Essentially, the Court of Appeal observed that while the view of the Supreme Court with regard to the freedom of association and collective bargaining has evolved, it was not open to a lower court to overturn prior 1987 decisions of the superior court as this question is best left with the Supreme Court itself. The long and short of it is that the Court of Appeal more or less invited the appellants to take the matter upstairs.

It seems very likely that the labour movement will seek leave to appeal the Court of Appeal decision to the Supreme Court, but there is also a chance that dialogue between organized labour and the government will lead to a workable compromise on the question of essential services legislation.

Government has acknowledged that the 2008 PSESA is flawed and public sector unions have indicated a willingness to address the subject. The days ahead will tell.

July 1 deadline approaching quickly, GSU's \$2,000 scholarships

GSU is pleased to offer \$2,000 scholarships to five students who demonstrate an ability and a passion to inspire positive change in their community. GSU members, their spouses, and their dependants are eligible.

Application forms, eligibility

details, and application requirements are available and explained in detail under the MEMBER SERVICES | SCHOLARSHIPS tabs on the GSU web page at www.gsu.ca.

Don't miss out! The deadline for receipt of applications is July 1.



You said what? questions, observations, and tips from GSU members

“My manager has called me into a meeting. What should I do?”

You’ve been called into a meeting with your manager. Your spidey-sense is tingling and you sense something is up. What should you do?

Ask if this is a disciplinary meeting.

It is within your rights to know the nature of the meeting you are attending.

Disciplinary meeting? Find someone to accompany you.

You are allowed to bring someone with you to any disciplinary meeting. You should not attend a discipline meeting alone.

GSU staff reps are available to attend disciplinary meetings

at the request of members. Meetings with your employer can be stressful. It may be difficult to comprehend everything that is being said so having another set of ears can be helpful. It can be hard to come up with the right questions, get the clarification you need, or to ask the difficult questions you don’t want to ask but you would like answered.

A GSU rep can help you with that process.

Contact the union office for advice.

A GSU rep can review your rights with you and give you advice specific to your

situation, provide you with the right questions to ask, and advise you how to proceed.

As always, your call is confidential and we will not act on your behalf without your permission.

Problems in the workplace? Call us.

No question is too small and problems are often easier to fix if you catch them early in the process. Contact your GSU staff rep for advice or assistance.

Do you have a question, comment, or situation you would like GSU to address here? Send your suggestions to GSU News at the Regina office.

Brag about it! Maurice shares his fish tale with *GSU News*

Maurice Brule

Ag Retail Manager III - Viterra

GSU member Maurice Brule was in Xtepa, Mexico in February when he got the thrill of a lifetime.

“For years I have been taken a winter holiday and every year I go deep sea fishing and I always have terrible luck. I’ve always caught something but nothing like this.

The group that I went with went fishing twice in two weeks. The fishing there was awesome we caught a total of eight sail fish. I caught two.

The first one I caught in week one was a little over eight feet long weighing around 90 pounds and it took me about 20 minutes to bring him in.



The second one I caught — the one in the picture — was over 10 feet long weighing around the 125 -130 pounds and it took me 45 minutes to bring him in. My arms were throbbing after I brought him in I could hardly lift my can of beer.”



Maurice will be entered in our draw to win two Grey Cup tickets.

Do you have something you would like to brag about? Details are available at www.gsu.ca.

Congratulations Jaqueline Anaquod - GSU's 2013 First Nations University of Canada bursary recipient

GSU sponsors a \$2,000 bursary for an Aboriginal student enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours at the First Nations University of Canada. Applicants must have successfully completed a minimum of 30 credit hours to a maximum of 60 credit hours in any area of study leading to a degree. GSU's 2013 bursary recipient is Jaqueline Anaquod.

Jaqueline is a Cree/Saulteaux woman who grew up in Regina. She is a full-time student at the First Nations University of Canada in the Health Studies program with a Concentration in Indigenous Health.

Jaqueline has a strong commitment to the preservation and revitalization of her Cree culture, traditions and language. She is passionate about working with Aboriginal people and it shows through her strong commitment to community service. Jaqueline was recently recognized as one of the YMCA Regina's 2013 Women of Distinction in the



GSU staff rep Steve Torgerson was pleased to attend the First Nations University of Canada honouring circle and awards tea on April 11 and present Jaqueline Anaquod with a cheque for \$2,000.

Cultural Heritage category.

Jaqueline is an Indigenous feminist, advocate, and activist who pursues justice, freedom, and equality for all. Her future plans are to work in health research initiatives, specifically in Aboriginal health issues. Her passion is researching ways to incorporate Aboriginal values and knowledge into local

healthcare services and systems.

Jaqueline credits her traditional knowledge keepers, Elders and mentors who have provided her with direction and guidance to achieve balance in all her endeavors.

GSU is pleased to offer this bursary and we wish Jaqueline continued success in her academic goals.

You told us you wanted a puzzle in your newsletter. We aim to please.

We've listed a few of the many occupations of GSU members for you to find in our first ever GSU word search.

We came up with the theme and words for the first puzzle. Now it's your turn.

Pick a topic you like. Then send us 20 words (15 characters long or less) and a title for your puzzle. If we turn your entry into a wordsearch for our newsletter we will send you one of our new GSU t-shirts.

GSU members at work

Q R E K R O W N I A R G I E Q
W B Y U T N A T N U O C C A T
C A K P O A T M I L L E R W W
W R C T S I L A N R U O J X P
A N D M A N Y M O R E Y I A F
D W G V I N O S R E P D R A Y
V O V J R T F X N G L C P H S
E R P U E S E L A S Q G V W D
R K A T K N K S K R E L C T E
T E H J R W W E L D E R S K G
I R D F O L K L D W P S M W E
S L I E W A E N F N A W S A V
I A V T T B H X K B C X M F Q
N E E M I Z A I Y L W F W T C
G H R K H S M E Z E Q U P D P

ACCOUNTANT
ADVERTISING
BARNWORKER
CLERKS
DIVER
ITWORKER
GRAINWORKER
JOURNALIST
LAB
OATMILLER
SALES
WELDERS
YARDPERSON
ANDMANYMORE

Contract continues as members transfer to Richardson Pioneer

May 1, 2013, was a momentous day for GSU members working at ten Viterra country operations as they transferred to employment with Richardson Pioneer along with the sale of those operations. What didn't change for the transferring employees was their coverage by the GSU collective agreement for country operations and maintenance employees and continuation of their union representation.

Under the provisions of Part I of the Canada Labour Code where an employer sells a business, the trade union that is the bargaining agent for employees in the business continues to be their collective bargaining representative and the person to whom the business is sold is bound by the

collective agreement applicable to the employees. In this case, the collective agreement bargained between Viterra and GSU that became effective on January 17, 2013, is binding on Richardson Pioneer at the ten Saskatchewan locations.

"In the lead up to the transition date there were quite a number of questions. GSU representatives did their best to provide quick and reliable information," said GSU general secretary Hugh Wagner. "We will continue to provide effective representation as the employment relationship with the new employer evolves."

"Lines of communication with senior Richardson management personnel were opened some time ago and as a result we've already been able to sort a few things out."

GSU is also available to respond to inquiries and interest expressed by Richardson and other employees who currently aren't represented by a union. All who contact us can rely on the fact that their communications with GSU are kept confidential as is any individual's decision to join the union.

"We are heading into an interesting time of change and that often means uncertainty," Wagner said. "GSU is committed to serving, assisting, and representing the employees who have chosen the union as their collective bargaining agent."

Choose a theme for GSU's 2014 convention

Plans are well underway for GSU's 2014 biennial convention March 20-22 near Dundurn, SK.

We want your suggestions for a theme that would help us set the tone for our next convention. What phrase or quote do you think would be particularly meaningful to the GSU and inspire the main points of the convention?

Send us your theme ideas.

If we choose your idea as our 2014 convention theme we will give you two tickets to a regular season* Rider game. Everyone who sends us an idea will be entered in our Grey Cup ticket draw**.

* Labour Day game excluded.

** Send us many theme ideas as you wish! Maximum of one entry per member through our Name Our Theme contest.



Ridonkulous Street Slang URBAN DICTIONARY

domestic blindness

Trying to look for something, an item (anywhere, usually in the house) ... but you can't find it, so you ask your spouse for help. Upon asking your spouse for help, the spouse points to the item that you were looking for, which is usually right in front of your face.

"Have you seen my phone?"

"It's right by your keys. Your domestic blindness is flaring up again."

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.