



GSU News

Everyone does better when EVERYONE does better Issue 3 - 2013



GSU is planning an autumn 2013 educational opportunity for members.

Our spring educational workshop format was so popular we are using the same model for a new program in October 2013.

This workshop will focus on practical at-work knowledge and tools for everyone who has a GSU agreement. The skills and information we are sharing will all be new and prepared specifically for this workshop.

Are you interested in attending or learning more? Contact Steve at GSU's Regina office.

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Local 4 (Grain Millers - Yorkton) members say yes to tentative agreement

The Local 4 bargaining committee reached a second tentative bargaining settlement with Grain Millers Canada Corp. on May 30. The most recent settlement was taken to the members of Local 4 on June 6 for discussion followed by a secret ballot vote on June 6 and 7. An earlier tentative settlement was voted down in early June.

When the ballots were counted 87 percent of members who voted accepted the settlement of a new collective agreement.

The settlement affords many improvements, such as:

- Wage rates will increase by 8.25%, 3%, and 3% in each year of the agreement
- Long Term Disability insurance paid by the employees, with a one-time salary increase of 50¢ an hour to cover the cost of premiums
- Power Engineers added a 50¢ step increase in their salary grid after two years of service
- Maintenance staff received a one-time salary adjustment of \$2.50 in the first year
- Shift premiums increased:
 - afternoon premium increased 10¢ to 75¢ per hour.
 - evening premium increased

- 10¢ to \$1.10 per hour
- weekend premium increased \$1.00 to \$1.50 per hour
- RRSP matching increase from 4% to 5% in the third year
- Boot allowance increase from \$130 to \$200 annually
- Addition of 5 weeks' vacation after 15 years of service.

The new agreement is in effect retroactive to April 1, 2013.

The master collective agreement was signed by union and company representatives on June 28. Updated copies of the new collective agreement will be prepared and distributed to members of Local 4. In the meantime GSU is working with Grain Millers management to put the new Long Term Disability insurance plan in place.

Collective bargaining is a continuous process. As members begin to use the new collective agreement GSU will note areas which require more attention or change in future negotiations.

As always, GSU members of Local 4 and all GSU locals are encouraged to work together to identify and solve workplace problems and to bring problems to the attention of elected union officers or their GSU staff rep.

Attention Locals 1 (Viterra Ops/Maintenance), Local 2 (Viterra Office) and Local 14 (Richardson Pioneer) members!

Your collective agreement booklet is enclosed with this newsletter. If you have a co-worker who didn't receive their agreement, let us know.

The inside scoop

Who needs a holiday? You do.

Everyone needs a vacation once in a while.

If you are one of those people who have a large vacation bank you don't use you are actually at risk for decreasing your overall productivity, increasing your stress level and other health risks. You will also be more likely to burn out at work and be less productive than your vacation-taking co-workers.

You don't need a two-week vacation in a foreign country to experience the benefits of getting away from the office. Research shows that an active vacation involving new challenges will be the most beneficial use of your leisure time, but there is nothing wrong with spending a few days relaxing by playing golf or soaking up the sunshine in your yard or on the beach. The point of a vacation is to recharge and relax so you should take part in activities which help you to enjoy life.

I am pleased to say that GSU members and their bargaining committees have successfully bargained paid holidays into every GSU agreement. Paid vacation time away from the workplace is a privilege which not all working people have, so I encourage you to use the vacation provisions of your collective agreement, take a break from the stresses of work, relax, recharge, and enjoy the benefits of a vacation.



Hugh Wagner
GSU general secretary



GSU News

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in-house by GSU staff members.

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Upcoming events

- August 4-10** SFL Summer Camp 2013
Calling Lakes Centre
Fort Qu'Appelle, SK
- Sept. 19-21** Sask. Federation of Labour's
OH&S Conference
Saskatoon, SK
- Oct. 30-Nov. 1** Sask. Federation of Labour's
58th Annual Convention
Saskatoon, SK

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

Brag about it: Lynn and the biggest, baddest bruise

Lynn Brownlee

Sales and Admin - Viterra
Wadena, SK

When Lynn Brownlee read about GSU's *Brag About It* contest she immediately knew she was a candidate for bragging about her biggest, baddest, bruise.

Lynn and her family were enjoying some unseasonably late snowmobiling on the morning on May 9, 2013. The fun ended quickly when Lynn hit a hard drift which stopped her in her tracks.

"I flew forward and hit my knee on the front of my skidoo. I drove 35 kilometers on my sled with a busted knee cap. I was hauled away by ambulance and had surgery," Lynn told GSU News. "Now two pins and chicken wire hold my knee together. If you want to see my x-ray I would be pleased to share it with you!"

Lynn was off work and a regular participant in physio as she learned how to bend her knee and to rebuild muscle in her thigh so she could walk.

GSU News recently checked in with Lynn and we were glad to hear she is well on her way to a complete recovery.



(Above) Lynn Brownlee's bruise.
(Right) An enthusiastic Lynn Brownlee shows her injury isn't going to slow her down.
More pictures of Lynn's injury are available at www.gsu.ca.



"I am crutch free and walking great!," said Lynn "I even managed to go seadooing at the lake this weekend."

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

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

Send us your picture and a short story about what you have to brag about and we will enter you in our Grey Cup draw.

Details are available when you search *Brag About It* at www.gsu.ca.



What are the most important things for you to have at work?

GSU's spring 2013 membership survey challenged members to identify what they considered to be the most important things to have at work. Participants were encouraged to select as many options as applied.

Source: GSU 2013 membership survey results.

Competitive wages - 89%

Pension/retirement benefits - 82%

Medical benefits - 77%

Sick leave benefits - 75%

Vacation - 75%

GSU is a proud sponsor of Saskatchewan's second annual Wounded Warriors Weekend

Founded in 2006, Wounded Warriors Canada is a non-profit organization that helps Canadian Forces members – be they full time or reservists – who have been wounded or injured in their service to Canada.

The primary focus of Wounded Warriors Canada is on mental health and, particularly, the staggering impact of PTSD, perpetrated by Operational Stress Injuries. Overall, they aim to help any Veteran in need as they transition to civilian life. In addition to providing a wide range of programs and services, Wounded Warriors Canada helps find solutions where gaps have left our soldiers in need.

In August of 2012 the town of Nipawin hosted the first Saskatchewan Wounded Warriors Weekend. It was an unprecedented event that drew worldwide attention. 112 wounded veterans from Canada and the United States were warmly welcomed for a weekend of fishing, golfing, outdoor fun, musical performances, great food and camaraderie. By all accounts it was a resounding success and a transformative weekend for everyone involved.

The community and region of Nipawin and unions and businesses in Saskatchewan - such as GSU - are hosting a second Wounded Warriors Weekend from August 2 to 5, 2013. The Saskatchewan Legislature is also on board



with the event and they have approved declaring the August 2013 civic holiday to be known as Wounded Warriors Weekend.

Wounded Warriors Weekend 2013 has expanded to include more than 160 soldiers and care givers, from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. Lund Boats, West Jet, Grain and General Services Union, Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, Diamond North Credit Union and International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada have signed on as sponsors.

“GSU is proud to be a sponsor of Wounded Warriors Weekend 2013. Our nations send young people of the military into harm’s way and all too often the effects of the

injuries they sustain, both visible and invisible, are not adequately understood or appropriately addressed by the federal government,” said GSU general secretary Hugh Wagner. “The Wounded Warriors Weekend in Nipawin is one way to shine a light on the problems being experienced by returned veterans of overseas assignments to places like Afghanistan. It is also a unique coming together of the community to say thank you and to support those who serve.”

For more information or to learn more about sponsorship opportunities call Blake Emmons at 306.862.4523. View the full schedule of events and program information at woundedwarriorsweekend.org.

GOOD NATURED VOLUNTEERS MAY STILL BE NEEDED

At least 200 good-natured people are needed to assist in various tasks during three days of events (such as parking assistants, stage hands, ushers,

and a general stand-by list of helpers). If you are able to pitch in and help out, email: WoundedWarriorsWeekend@gmail.com.

Rules have since changed, but U of R students face deportation for working off campus

Victoria and Favour are currently living in church basements—unable to go outside, attend school, or see their friends.

The two University of Regina students from Nigeria have been in sanctuary since June 2012 after they unknowingly violated the terms of their student visas by working off campus.

The Canadian Border Service Agency office had the discretionary power to apply fees or fines, but they chose the toughest possible punishment and issued deportation orders.

Since the women's removal order, the rules have changed to allow international students to work off campus with a single permit. Under the old system separate work permits were required to work on and off campus.

Victoria and Favour remain optimistic that efforts to pressure the government to grandfather them into the new rule will be successful and that someday soon they will be able



Victoria Ordu and Favour Amadi came to Canada as scholars with the endorsement and funding of the Nigerian Government. They are currently in sanctuary, facing deportation for working off campus for two weeks at WalMart.

to return to classes, complete their degree programs, and return to Nigeria.

"... the only way I stay strong is when I think of my education, ambitions, purpose in life and the fact that I do not

want to be a quitter," Favour says in her May 2013 letter to her supporters. "I know that behind every great man (person) lies a greater story; therefore I know that this is my story in the making."

Victoria and Favour could use your help.

Visit www.stopURdeportations.com to learn more about this case and take action and find justice for Victoria and Favour.

GSU scholarship committee to meet, choose recipients

GSU's 2013 scholarship applications are now in the hands of GSU's scholarship committee for review.

Ordinarily GSU's executive committee - the president and two vice presidents - comprise the scholarship committee, but this year vice president Jim Brown's daughter has applied for a scholarship and he has stepped down from the 2013 committee.

"Even though the personal and identifying information of the applicant is removed from every scholarship essay and reference letter before they are provided to the scholarship committee, I prefer to take a leave from the committee this year," Jim said. "The committee works hard to select the best applicants and it's important to make sure that the decisions of the scholarship committee and the process they

use is beyond reproach."

GSU Joint Executive Council officer Brett North joins GSU president Carolyn Illerbrun and vice president Mandy Windecker to round out the 2013 scholarship committee.

Scholarship applicants are chosen based on essay content and on their community involvement and activity.

This year's scholarship recipients are expected to be announced in September.

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

“I’m new to the company and I’ve never been a union member. What does the union do for me?”

The main goals of GSU are to bargain improved collective agreements and to serve the needs of all members. GSU’s financial and human resources are directed to providing

service and protection of members.

GSU can help you by:

- giving advice or ideas on how to handle a workplace situation,
- accessing information and gathering facts you may not have access to,
- identifying whether your rights have been violated,
- helping to negotiate terms of severance,
- advocating on your behalf with company management, insurance companies, or government agencies like

EI and Workers’ Comp

- calculating commuted value estimates and explaining the benefits and entitlements you are eligible for.

As a member of GSU you are never alone in facing changes and challenges. Contacting us does not mean you are obligated to file a grievance and we will never contact your employer or act on your behalf without consultation, direction, and approval from you.

Do you have a question, comment, or situation you would like GSU to address here? Send your suggestions to [GSU News](#).



Request a copy of our welcome booklet to learn more about belonging to GSU.

GSU files response to Richardson Pioneer’s application to CIRB

On June 13, 2013, GSU’s legal counsel, Ronni Nordal, submitted the union’s response to the application made by Richardson Pioneer Limited (Richardson) to the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB). Richardson’s application (received by GSU on May 31, 2013) seeks a review of the current bargaining unit structure to determine GSU’s status as bargaining agent and the union representation rights of country operations and maintenance employees in Saskatchewan who were acquired by Richardson as a result of divestitures by Viterra Inc.

Richardson’s application to the CIRB acknowledges that it is the successor employer to Viterra at ten unionized grain elevator and related Ag centre

operations in Saskatchewan. Richardson also acknowledges that the employees at those locations are represented by GSU and covered by the collective agreement previously bargained between the union and Viterra.

GSU’s formal response to Richardson’s application seeks specifics in relation to a number of claims made by the employer and references the substantial body of CIRB case law upholding the continuation of collective bargaining and union representation rights of unionized employees whose employment is transferred to a new employer with a non-union work force.

“GSU is committed to defending the collective bargaining rights, collective agreement, and union

representation of its members who transferred to employment with Richardson along with the sale of the ten Saskatchewan locations. GSU is not willing to put the collective bargaining rights of existing GSU members at risk,” said Wagner. “We are also interested in encouraging the employees at the non-unionized Richardson locations to decide whether they too want to become part of the union bargaining unit.”

“Richardson had until June 30 to submit its reply to GSU’s response. Both parties have requested a hearing, however the CIRB has not as yet responded to the requests nor has it set a date,” Wagner said.

GSU will continue to provide more information as the process unfolds.

GSU: proud supporter of swimming ... and mutton busting

We first became aware of Grenfell's "Save Our Pool" fund in 2012 when GSU members in Sub-Local 1.8 GSU donated their Community Connection program money to support this worthy cause. When those same GSU members told us a sponsor was needed to supply a token of recognition to mutton busters at the second annual Grenfell Bull-a-rama benefiting the Save the Pool fund we jumped on board.

By all reports the mutton busting was injury-free and a big hit with the participants and nearly 700 spectators.

GSU is pleased to have played a small part in such a worthy community event.



Bull-a-rama mutton busters posed with their GSU bag of goodies after their harrowing rides. Many thanks to Randy at lewisimages.ca for generously donating this awesome picture for our use.

GSU does its best to support members and the communities in which they work and live. Talk to your elected GSU officers or your GSU staff rep for more information about sponsorship opportunities.

Bill 85 The Saskatchewan Employment Act

Where do we go from here?

On May 13, 2013, the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly passed the provincial government's omnibus bill re-writing more than 50 years of labour legislation covering working people in the province who fall under provincial jurisdiction.

The new Saskatchewan Employment Act consolidated 12 separate labour Acts, covering some 900 pages, into a single piece of legislation spanning only 184 pages. The Act contains more than 250 references to undisclosed regulations and won't become law until the necessary regulations are drawn up,

perhaps later this autumn.

"When the draft regulations see the light of day it will be important to scrutinize the overall effect very closely," said GSU general secretary Hugh Wagner. "More importantly, we have to organize working people to oppose regressive laws and impress on the government that a march back in time will be resisted."

"It's taken a lot of detailed work to determine how the new Act stacks up against prior legislation such as the Labour Standards Act and the Trade Union Act," Wagner said. "The overall result is a significantly flawed piece of legislation with the apparent intent of

undermining the rights of working people, unionized or not, and tipping workplace balance heavily in favour of employers."

"Considering the robust state of the provincial economy and our stable labour relations climate, the celebration of Bill 85 by employer lobby groups seems oddly out of place," said GSU president Carolyn Illerbrun. "Components of the Saskatchewan Employment Act will contribute to labour relations fragmentation, disruption, litigation, instability and, inevitably, increased cost for employers, unions and tax payers alike."

Canada performs “exceptionally well” in measures of well-being

A study published in May 2013 by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that “Canada performs exceptionally well in measures of well-being,” according to an online report.

On a range of measures — housing, income, health and safety — Canada scored among the world’s best-performing countries. The study scored 36 nations, including 34 OECD members, Russia and Brazil. No overall ranking is reported.

Income

The average household earns US\$28,194 each year



after taxes. That’s more than US\$5,000 above the OECD average. There is disparity at both ends of the earnings spectrum though, not surprisingly. The top 20% takes home US\$55,718, while the bottom 20% earns US\$10,526. We ranked seventh on household wealth and ninth on income.

[By comparison, in June 2013 the average annual wage for a GSU member working for Viterra was \$60,270.]

Work-life balance

Canadians work an average 1,702 hours per year. That’s 74 hours below the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average. When asked if they work more than 50 hours a week, 4% said yes. (The OECD average is 9%.) We ranked ninth on working long hours.

Source: Kevin Press, Brighterlife.ca, May 2013

Visit www.gsu.ca for a link to this story online and other reasons to love living in Canada.

GSU presses for information on Viterra’s Agri-Products business divestiture

Recently Agri-Products employees have received communications from management of both companies regarding the impending divestiture of Viterra’s agri-products business to Agrium. In addition, employees at nine locations in Saskatchewan have been advised that they will not be part of the larger divestiture transaction, but will instead be affected by a sale of these locations to another, as yet undisclosed, buyer.

To date solid information from Viterra about the divestitures has been incomplete and unsatisfactory. Several employees have expressed concerns to GSU that they are not being treated any differently than the facilities and equipment.

Several employees are looking at grievance action by GSU over the divestiture as it affects them.

GSU is pressing Viterra to disclose its complete plan and to show more sensitivity to the concerns of affected employees. At the same time it is important for all to remember that only employees represented by GSU will carry their collective agreement, collective bargaining and union representation rights into their employment with the new employer regardless of whether they are part of the larger Agrium transaction or the smaller spin off.

We encourage employees to contact GSU with questions or concerns. Call toll free to 1.866.522.6686 or send an email to gsu.regina@sasktel.net.



going commandtoe

Going commandtoe is when you wear shoes without socks. Often done in the summer or if no socks are available.

Does not apply to when wearing sandals/flip-flops because socks in that context would just be wrong anyway.

“Ray saw it was a bit of a scorcher outside so he decided to get some air between his toes by going commandtoe.”

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.