



# GSA News

Everyone does better when EVERYONE does better Issue 4 - 2013

## Join us for another GSA educational workshop

Join us Nov. 27 and 28 to sharpen your knowledge and skills. This course is designed to help you as an employee, a union member, and a volunteer working in your community.

You will learn about:

- the nuts and bolts of representation
- the current economic and political climate
- how to engage others in a dialogue leading to action.

This workshop is available to all GSA members, but enrollment is limited to 50 people. Contact the GSA office in Regina to register or to learn more.



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## Court of Appeal upholds vacation pay arbitration decision

On Oct. 30, 2012, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal heard Viterra’s application to overturn an arbitration award and Court of Queen’s Bench decisions upholding GSA’s grievances challenging the company’s decision to change how it administers and pays vacation pay on overtime pay. On Sept. 10, 2013, the Court released its decision and upheld the previous two rulings in favour of GSA’s grievances on this subject.

“Conversations have taken place between GSA’s legal counsel Ronni Nordal and the lawyer representing Viterra,” said GSA general secretary Hugh Wagner. “It’s my understanding that the Company has committed to begin the leg work to determine who is owed money and how much they are owed, including interest.”

This process started more than four years ago as the result of the alert action of a GSA member.



The eventual payout will run into several hundreds of thousands of dollars for GSA members.

“It is long overdue and it is now time for Viterra to move quickly to get this finally resolved,” Wagner said. “Sometimes the wheels of justice move slowly, but we are committed to the process of riding it out and getting what is fair and just for our members.”

Contact your GSA staff rep if you have questions about how the court decision might affect you.



## Join our band of Mo-Bros

Team GREAT STACHE UNION is coming back bigger and better in November 2013.

We want to raise even more money to fight prostate cancer and have more fun while doing it. Contact Brett North, Willie Harris, or Steve Torgerson for information or to join and get growin’.

## The inside scoop

It seems these days that the political economic climate for organized labour or civil society is growing increasingly hostile. A concerted right-wing assault on civil rights, labour rights and trade union rights is testing just how far we can be pushed before we push back.

Those who campaign against unions and civil rights are well funded by elements of the one percent of society who hold the wealth and power.

The most reliable and enduring defenders of our society are the union movement, environmentalists, and our allies.

The union movement was founded on the principles that what we have we want for all others and an injury to one is an injury to all. We can't possibly sustain our good fortune or improve on it if others around us are experiencing the destruction of their rights and welfare as citizens of this country.

If we sacrifice our environment and our freedom in the name of perceived security or material success we will ultimately be left with nothing.

Whatever happens we should not let adversity or bad legislation get us down or turn us away from what we do best.

Let's prove to ourselves and our opponents that we will find the ways and means to persevere. Indeed, we will do better than persevere. We will find the ways and means to succeed and to grow.



Hugh Wagner  
General Secretary



# GSU News

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## Upcoming events

### Autumn 2013 GSU annual meetings

Attend your upcoming annual meeting. Union officers will be elected and a vote on continuation of defense fund dues will be held.

### Oct. 30-Nov. 1 Sask. Federation of Labour's 58th Annual Convention

Saskatoon, SK  
GSU's Grey Cup ticket draw will be held at this meeting.

Information on these events and other upcoming events is posted on GSU web page: [www.gsu.ca](http://www.gsu.ca).

## Arbitrations scheduled for member, executive grievances

Whether they are filed by individual GSU members or your union as executive or policy grievances, most grievances are resolved during the grievance procedure. At the same time a number of grievances end up in front of an arbitrator or an arbitration board as provided in the collective agreements between the various employers and GSU-represented employees.

Currently seven arbitrations have been scheduled to hear GSU member and union executive grievances.

**1 - TERMINATION** - On Oct. 21 and 22 a board of arbitration will hear the grievance of a former employee in Local 1 (Viterra Country Operations and Maintenance, SK) who is challenging the employer's decision to terminate his employment.

**2 - OVERTIME** - On Nov. 5 and 6 a sole arbitrator will hear an executive grievance filed on behalf of all employees in Local 1 with respect to a dispute over when double-time overtime pay is payable. The outcome of this arbitration will also have an overlapping impact for employees who transferred to

Richardson Pioneer (Local 14), Agrium and/or Federated Co-operatives.

**3 - SUSPENSION** - On Jan. 9 and 10, 2014, the grievance of an employee in the Local 1 bargaining unit will be arbitrated regarding his three-week suspension.

**4 - PAY GRADES** - On Feb. 12 and 13, 2014, with the arbitration of a GSU executive grievance at the Viterra Saskatoon terminal elevator challenging job classifications and pay grades.

**5 - TPHD** - On March 26 and 27, 2014, a Local 1 (Viterra Country Operations and Maintenance) employee's claim that he was eligible for temporary performance of higher duty pay will be arbitrated.

### **6 - PAY INCREASES** -

On April 8 and 9, 2014, an arbitrator will hear the grievances of six employees in Local 1 who are challenging Viterra's decisions regarding their Nov. 1, 2012, pay increases and the effect, if any, of performance evaluation results.

**7 - TRANSFER** - On April 24 and 25, 2014, an arbitrator will hear the grievances of two employees who are challenging Viterra's decision to transfer them to Richardson Pioneer instead of giving them the option to remain as Viterra employees and/or be provided with a notice of job elimination under Article 24 of the Local 1 collective agreement.

**Contacting GSU doesn't mean you are obligated to file a grievance.** We are here to assist you in any way we can, but we won't contact your employer or act on your behalf without consultation, direction, and approval from you.

## Bargaining, transportation issues addressed at ILWU executive meeting

GSU president Carolyn Illerbrun, vice president Jim Brown, and general secretary Hugh Wagner attended the International Executive Board meeting of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union from August 21 to 23 in Vancouver, BC.

The purpose of attending was to build on the relationship between the ILWU and affiliates and to share information about the collective bargaining and public policy struggles facing transportation unions in Canada and the United States.



GSU representatives and their RWDSU Sask. counterparts visited the ILWU Canada offices on the Vancouver waterfront before they headed home. (L-r) Gary Burkart (RWDSU Sask.), Jeff Peters (RWDSU Sask.), Carolyn Illerbrun (GSU), Jim Brown (GSU), Jyalmen Sidho (ILWU Canada), Paul Guillet (RWDSU Sask.), Hugh Wagner (GSU), Rob Ashton (ILWU Canada).

# Labour greets Wounded Warriors Weekend veterans

Representatives from Grain and General Services Union, the Sask. Joint Board of the Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union, and the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses gathered in Regina on Aug. 4 to show support and welcome the caravan of Wounded Warrior Weekend participants and their caregivers.

Union members, officers, and staff waved banners and cheered as the caravan wound through the streets of Regina en route to Nipawin, SK, where they enjoyed a weekend of sport fishing and other outdoor activities designed to ease the minds and heal the souls of 180 veterans from around the world.

"GSU members support and appreciate the service of veterans, and it was important that we be here today to share that sentiment with these brave men and women who have given so much to our country," said GSU general secretary Hugh Wagner.

For more information visit [woundedwarriorsweekend.org](http://woundedwarriorsweekend.org).



*Above: GSU, RWDSU, and SUN representatives gather to greet the Wounded Warriors caravan.*

*Below (l-r) GSU staff rep Lawrence Maier, GSU Local 8 president (Advanced Engineering) president Doug Murray, and GSU general secretary Hugh Wagner.*



*Photo credits: GSU president Carolyn Illerbrun.*

## GSU prepares for bargaining in five different Locals

Agreement renewal bargaining is always on the agenda for GSU. Before the close of the calendar year, four GSU Locals will serve their employers with a notice to bargain.

First off the mark is GSU **Local 5 (Western Producer)** where the collective agreement expired at the end of July. Bargaining began with an exchange of proposals Oct. 7. **Local 8 (Advance Engineered Products)** collective agreements in Regina and

Saskatoon expire on Oct. 31. Bargaining begins Oct. 10 in Saskatoon. Regina will soon follow when proposals are finalized and dates for commencing are set with Company management.

Meanwhile, the collective agreement covering **Local 12**

**(Hillcrest Farms)** expires on Dec. 20 and the **Local 13 (IATSE 295)** agreement will expire on Dec. 31, 2013. Notice to bargain for these two Locals will be served later this fall.

Finally, the collective agreement covering **Local 6 (Wildwest Steelhead/Lucky Lake Fish Farm)** expires at the end of February 2014. Notice to bargain will be served during the open period.

# Congratulations!

## 2013 GSU SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



### Jennifer Brown

Jennifer is a first year student at the University of Regina, majoring in Museum Studies. Jennifer plans to obtain her Master's degree in her chosen subject and a secondary degree in either Paleontology or Anthropology.

Jennifer's father, Jim Brown, is a GSU sub-local 1.1 (Viterra) member.

Thank you to our 2013 scholarship committee members Carolyn Illerbrun (GSU president), Mandy Windecker (GSU vice president), and Brett North (Joint Executive Council officer). The scholarship committee met during the summer months to review scholarship applications and choose our five scholarship recipients.

All identifying information was removed from applications before copies were provided to the scholarship committee.

Essays were judged with heavy emphasis on content and intention rather than the use of perfect punctuation and grammar.



### Erika Dowling

Erika is currently a second year student in the College of Agriculture & Bioresources at the University of Saskatchewan. She is majoring in Crop Sciences.

This past summer Erika was a GSU Local 1 member working at the Viterra White Star location.



### Alex Laird

Alex is attending the University of Saskatchewan, taking a four-year commerce degree.

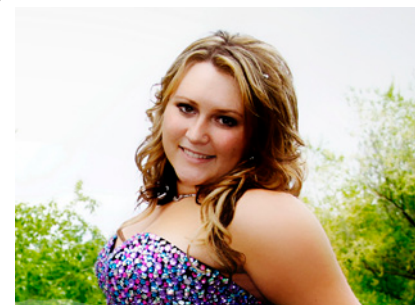
During the past two summers Alex has been a GSU member working for Viterra Ag Retail in Swift Current as a summer student.



### Erin Rauert

Erin is currently enrolled in her second year of Arts and Science at St. Peter's College in Muenster. After Erin receives her English Writing Diploma from St. Peter's she intends to enroll in law school at the University of Saskatchewan.

Erin's mother, Deanna Rauert, is a GSU Local 1 (Viterra) member.



### Darrienne Sauer

Darrienne is enrolled in the Arts and Science program at the University of Saskatchewan. She hopes to eventually study veterinary medicine or pharmacy.

Darrienne's father, Darren Sauer, is a GSU sub-local 1.14 (Viterra) member.

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

### “What exactly is collective bargaining?”

As described in Wikipedia, “Collective bargaining is a process of negotiations between employers and a group of employees aimed at reaching agreements that regulate working conditions. The interests of the employees are commonly presented by representatives of a trade union to which the employees belong. The collective agreements reached by these negotiations usually set out wage scales, working hours, training, health and safety, overtime, grievance

mechanisms, and rights to participate in workplace or company affairs.”

In GSU, an elected bargaining committee of union members, officers and staff negotiate with a single employer and its representatives.

The actual process of collective bargaining is the process of negotiation between the union and employer representatives to determine the terms and conditions of employment of employees.

Ideally, collective bargaining results in a mutually beneficial

agreement. The terms and conditions of that agreement are taken to the members of the union and to the company representatives (usually a board of directors) for a vote on approval.

GSU will be serving notice to bargain and entering into collective bargaining with five different employers by early next year.

Learn more about GSU’s bargaining schedule on page 4.

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

## GSU officers and staff attend **together FAIRNESS WORKS** seminar

Officer and member education is a priority for GSU, so when the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) brought their *Together Fairness Works* leadership program to Saskatchewan, 17 GSU officers, members, and staff signed up.

The one-day workshop offered tips and techniques for identifying what matters to union members, how to build awareness of the services unions provide, and a need to begin emphasizing our commitment to fairness in the workplace.

“Unions are really facing an unprecedented level of attacks from employers and from the governments alike,” said GSU general secretary Hugh Wagner. “That requires us to adjust and come up with new ways to continue to provide quality services and protect their membership.”



(L-r) Michelle Houlden, Brian Samson, Travis Brewer, and Dale Markling (not pictured) attended the Sept. 11 workshop in Saskatoon.

GSU participants at the Sept. 10 workshop in Regina met briefly after the educational to discuss what they had learned and how to use their new knowledge and skills to serve GSU members.



### Saskatchewan Employment Act is back on the agenda

**In May the Government of Saskatchewan passed the Saskatchewan Employment Act. When it becomes law this autumn it will replace 15 separate pieces of labour legislation in the province, including the current Labour Standards Act and the Trade Union Acts.**

Reviewing, updating and improving legislation and regulations isn't a bad thing if carried out thoroughly, fairly, and in a balanced way. Unfortunately none of these attributes apply to the emergence of the Saskatchewan Employment Act as the government of Saskatchewan only allowed 90 days for the public to make written submissions at the height of summer in 2012. Even then, it appears the government listened much more closely to a small segment of one side of the dialogue.

**Was 90 days enough time to consider 15 Acts and over 900 pages of legislation?** It doesn't seem so as the resulting Saskatchewan Employment Act is complex, unclear, and unfinished with many of the regulations which will affect Saskatchewan workers yet to be determined.

**The Act throws into doubt basic labour standards such as meal breaks, two consecutive days of rest, the 8-hour day, the threshold for paying overtime and call-in pay.** With regard to labour

relations, the Act is one-sided as it undermines employees' collective bargaining rights and stable labour relations.

As written and passed, the Saskatchewan Employment Act deferred a lot of the legislation's meaning and intent to "Regulations". It is important to note that "Regulations" are not subject to review or debate in the legislative assembly as they are only subject to approval by the Cabinet and a short 30-day period of public notice.

**In the rushed 90-day consultation process in summer 2012 government asked for input without ever putting into writing what it intended to do.** Then between July 31 and the beginning of December 2012 government miraculously produced the 191 page Saskatchewan Employment Act which dramatically re-writes more than 65 years of labour legislation.

Now it's happening all over again in relation to the Regulations intended to accompany and give meaning to the Saskatchewan Employment Act.

On July 26 the Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety announced a 90-day consultation period that closed on September 27. Once again the government has not disclosed its intentions in connection with Regulations nor has it shared what is

already being drafted.

This is a lot like putting the cart before the horse. Government can do much better in fulfilling its duty to conduct itself carefully, thoughtfully, and with the utmost transparency when it proposes to do things that affect or impair our rights.

By comparison, the government of Saskatchewan is taking much more time and allowing for much more input in relation to the legislation governing livestock branding.

The backbone of our economy and democratic society is a strong middle class. Two of the main pillars of the middle class are progressive labour standards and effective unions of working people who strive to generate a good and growing standard of living.

**Legislation and regulations that weaken these pillars will ultimately weaken our economic progress, damage our shared prosperity and undermine our communities.**

All we have to do is consider the effects of what has gone on for far too long in the United States in order to have grave concerns that the Saskatchewan Employment Act is propelling us in that direction.

For more information visit  
[www.fairwork.ca](http://www.fairwork.ca)

# Shift schedule changes wreak havoc with employees, vacation plans

In July members of GSU Local 9 at the Hi Pro Feed Mill in Chilliwack were surprised to learn that management had unilaterally changed their shift schedules by eliminating the 12-hour shifts they had been working for years, and establishing a new 10-hour shift schedule.

Employees were told that a reduction in chicken quotas and a downturn in orders for feed was the reason for the schedule change at the Chilliwack Mill. Unfortunately the lack of consultation with the employees and GSU before implementing the new shifts quickly led to problems.

"The employees had been working 12-hour shifts from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Everyone was used to getting up, getting work done, and getting off work," GSU staff rep Lawrence Maier reported. "With the new 10-hour shifts,

employees on day shift were to start at 10:00 a.m. and work until 8:00 p.m., and the night shifts were to begin work at 8:00 p.m. and end at 6:00 a.m. After years of the 12-hour shift, the new 10-hour shift was a big adjustment."

"Employees had booked vacation time under the 12-hour schedule, and the new 10-hour schedule threw plans out of whack," Maier added. "As you can imagine, sudden changes to summer vacation plans didn't make the workers very happy."

In addition, Operations quickly found that these shifts were unworkable. As a result of discussions with the GSU and employees, shifts were changed to a more workable 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. shifts.

At the height of the confusion, management had been doing bargaining

unit work. As a result, a union policy grievance was filed regarding work of the bargaining unit. The grievance has since been moved to arbitration.

In other Local 9 news, chairperson Larry Perry stepped down when he accepted a job with another employer and vice chair Kelly Saretzky has assumed the role of president. We appreciate all the work Larry did to get Local 9 started - including his work to bargain a first collective agreement. We wish him well.

Committee members Tony (Roger) Leon and Kelly Polhill attended a BC Federation of Labour course on occupational health and safety. They are scheduled to attend another course in November.

Annual meeting time is around the corner and members are encouraged to attend.

The draw for our two winners of two tickets each to the 2013 Grey Cup in Regina will be held during the upcoming SFL Convention Oct. 30 to Nov. 1, 2013 in Saskatoon.



**This is it! Here is your last opportunity to enter our draw for Grey Cup tickets.**

It's easy to enter. Visit our web page at [www.gsu.ca](http://www.gsu.ca) and use our on-line form to update your current contact information. Even if you are certain we have your current contact information, fill out the form

and we will enter your name in our draw. Easy!

Only one updated contact information entry into our 2013 Grey Cup draw per GSU member is allowed. You must be a GSU member to win.

**Ridonkulous Street Slang**

**URBAN**  
**DICTIONARY**

snice

A combination of snow and ice.

"Man, the dog just came in covered in snice. Awesome!"

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](http://urbandictionary.com).