

THE FREE PRESSING NEWS

OCTOBER 15, 2002 ISSUE - WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA

CONTRACT VOTE

**Thursday, Oct. 17, 7pm
Transcona Country Club
2070 Dugald Road
(Dugald and Plessis)**

THEY CAME, WE TALKED ... AND NOBODY WENT HOME ALL SMILEY.

Let's cut to the chase: The only thing everybody wants to know is what happened at Monday's talks with our owners.

In a nutshell, it was a long, hard day of butting heads - it was clear that both sides felt they were giving up the world to make a deal. It was the most stupid, bizarre and surreal set of negotiations the council has ever experienced. Many thought the day was a flashback acid trip. The rest just wished it had been.

After 15 hours of negotiations, management's latest final offer is a two-year deal offering wage increases of two per cent per year. Other features: Retirement at 60 (only on the new pension) for the inside workers. The mailroom got a new days off and vacation schedule. The Company agreed to put the mailroom part time work schedule in the phone system between 3pm and 4:30pm. We also have a clause that prevents the company from making you use your own car unless you volunteer. The carriers receive an extra 1/2 cent = per paper per year, an extra two cents per kilometre per year and \$100 signing bonus. The bonus is prorated over the last 11 months to compensate carriers for the time since their contract expired. The Company agreed to post vacant routes for carriers to include the



WE'VE GOT MORE SUPPORT THAN A 24-HOUR GIRDLE

Sisters and brothers from around the city and across the country have been sending us kind words to keep going.

Paul Moist, president of CUPE 500, said that it was important for all union members to stick together.

"We also want you to know that we are refusing to do interviews with the Free Press and will maintain this stand until such time as your employer concludes a collective agreement with you," Moist wrote in a letter to both unions.

We have also had support from GCIU members from the Winnipeg Sun who have walked the line.

Iris Taylor, a former CEP Local 7 president and now a CLC rep, came to the line and delivered donuts.

CEP Local 341 president Art Crane also showed his support on the line.

To those people and

route bonus. Part timers can now take their vacation pay when they take their vacation. Parking at the Freep will remain at the current charge. The Company removed all concessionary language. The Joint Council did not agree to this deal and it is not a tentative agreement. Instead, the council told the Company we would take the offer back to the members and let them decide.

The Company's offer does not reflect the hard work and commitment our members have for their jobs. It does not reflect the reality of the modern, progressive workplace. But the offer does reflect the mindset of our new owners. Ron Stern and Bob Silver have made it clear - they believe you are overpaid and they will be back in two years to take another whack at us. That's why this puppy is a two-year deal, and not three years - there's no way anyone would lease this lemon for a three-year term.

SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

Immediately? nothing.

The strike is still on and the picketing will continue. We continue to strike the Free Press until you decide what to do at the vote. We'll have more details at the meeting.

WINNIPEG SUN UPDATE

Over on Church Street, the competition has been struggling to keep up with the demand for display ads, circulation and flyer inserts. In short, they can't print up enough paper to meet the opportunity presented by this strike.

On the staffing front, Sun reporters have been told their holidays are on hold. We've also heard a former Winnipeg Sun staff who now works in Alberta will be parachuted in to the province.

The good news is for the long-term health for the Freep is that Sun

countless others, thanks for showing solidarity!

PICKETING IS YOUR DUTY - NOT A LIFESTYLE CHOICE.

At the risk of sounding like the parent of an errant teenager, too many of us have been missing the picket schedule. Please go to your shift, show up on time and stay for the duration. Just because we're talking to management doesn't mean the strike is over. Sometimes solidarity is inconvenient.

A MESSAGE FROM VICTORIA

Out in Lotusland, our comrades at the Victoria Times Colonist have been out on the picket line since late summer.

On Monday morning, we received this message from T-C employee Sharon Lloyd: "Greetings from Victoria, B.C. Just a short note to say "Hang in there!" We know what it's like to walk a picket line (coming up to week seven here). "However, our picket line photos look a little warmer than yours. So, stay warm and stay united." Well said.

We need to remain committed for as long as it takes to cut a reasonable deal.

SCAB UPDATE.

Although it's difficult to read the poorly edited and shoddily written online version of our newspaper put out by our managers, we have determined no less than four freelancers are the proud new owners of title "Scabrous little pustules" or "SCAB" for short.

management is too thick to realize they actually need more content in their paper. Publisher Gordon Norrie was quoted as saying he doesn't need more reporters because the Sun, as a member of a national chain, can get its copy elsewhere.

Two scab reviews have showed up in the entertainment section, one scab column appears in sports and a sports game story also was published online. Again, we're not going to mention any names while the strike is still on. But we have a long memory for this sort of stuff - if anyone you know is considering a life of scabbery, tell them to think again.

SOLIDARITY!