

THE FREE PRESSING NEWS

OCTOBER 16, 2002 ISSUE - WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA



Yesterday, a lot of people on the picket line had a lot of questions about what the heck is going on.

Yesterday's newsletter gave details on the Company's verbal proposal but we acknowledge it raised as many questions as it answered. So, here's an attempt to answer some of the more common and pressing questions regarding Thursday night's vote.

CONTRACT VOTE

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

TODAY'S AGENDA

A) The vote: Thursday, Oct. 17 at 7 p.m., Transcona Country Club, 2070 Dugald Rd. (Dugald and Plessis)

B) FAQ: Everything you wanted to know about management's latest offer.

C) The rally: Thursday at noon in front of the Freep building.

1. Why aren't we recommending the latest offer?

4. OK, so what happens at the vote on Thursday?

Here's how the vote works:
There are three distinct groups that'll vote on Thursday night:

A) CEP newspaper carriers.

B) The CEP inside workers, including circ., advertising, mailroom, editorial and creative services.

C) The GCIU, which represents the people who run the presses and technical maintenance.

Each group votes independently of the other. No group has a veto. If your group votes to accept the deal,

The joint council currently is recommending neither acceptance nor rejection of management's latest offer. According to the joint council, this latest offer is as much as the union could squeeze out of the stingy company so far. The company refused to offer anything more. The only way to press for more would be to continue job action - that is, staying on strike and picketing.

As of this writing we still don't have a document from the Company that both sides agree is the verbal offer made on Monday night. If Free Press management continues to stand on changes it made today the joint council will re-evaluate its position on rejecting the offer. If you reject the deal obviously there are no guarantees on how long you'll be out on strike and what moves the Company may make.

2. So what happened to all those nasty concessions the company tabled a couple of weeks ago, such as that 35 per cent wage cut for new workers and no seniority for part time workers?

All the company's initial demands are off the table. Their latest offer represents gains on our part in a couple of important areas.

First, the carriers received an increase of half a cent per paper per year, two cents per kilometre per year and a \$100 signing bonus, (prorated based on length of service over the past 11 months).

Secondly, the mailroom got new skeds for days off and vacations and an agreement to post part-time shifts earlier.

Thirdly, all employees in the pension plan will be able to retire at age 60 penalty free - but on the new pension only.

Fourth, every inside employee (both GCIU and CEP) will receive a pay

you have a contract. But if your group votes to reject the deal, you're still on strike.

5. So what happens if my group approves the deal but one or two of the others don't?

There's no easy answer to this one. Legally, your obligation is to return to work. If you follow your conscience and refuse to cross the picket line, you may be subject to discipline.

6. Why do we have to wait until Thursday night to vote?

First of all, after dithering for days, the company refused to put its latest final offer on paper until Wednesday, and even then they have slipped in a few extra (objectionable) clauses into the deal. Quite simply, the bargaining committee can not hold a vote on a contract offer it has not seen. As of mid afternoon Wednesday the Company has yet to deliver a revised offer.

Also, your union reps had a heck of a time locating a hall big enough to hold the vote on two or three days notice (we're talking 1,000 people in one room). After canvassing places such as the Winnipeg Arena, the Convention Centre and almost every hotel in town, the Transcona Country Club was the first place they could nail down.

7. Getting back to ratification, if we accept the deal, how soon could we go back to work?

Honestly, we don't know. We have yet to discuss back-to-work protocol with management. The union hopes

increase of two per cent for each of the next two years.

3. So just to recap, what do you union geniuses think about this offer?

Not much. We didn't give up a single thing during these admittedly difficult and often kooky negotiations. You should be proud of that. Your solidarity on the line has protected you and moved you forward, if only slightly. Never lose sight of the fact you showed the Company your power. They just haven't learned to respect it. Yet.

We think you deserve more. We're also disappointed about the Minnesota Twins.

to deal with this issue ASAP.

8. Will I get paid for the three days I went to work last week?

Legally, the company is required to pay you for those three days. The company has not given us any indication as to whether it will honour its legal obligations or not.

9. How much is that doggy in the window?

I don't think that doggy's for sale.

10. Do I get strike pay?

You will receive and sign for your first strike cheque on Day 15 of the strike. That means \$200 on Oct. 23 - assuming you've fulfilled your picketing obligations. After that, you'll get \$250 for every seven-day strike period. And by the way, strike pay is tax-free. Yay.

11. So what's this rally all about?

Thursday at noon, we're holding a big rally outside the Freep building. Manitoba Federation of Labour president Rob Hilliard will address the crowd, which should include members of other unions. You'll get free (non-alcoholic) drinks and (alcoholic) hot dogs.

SOLIDARITY!

"SCENES FROM THE LINE" PHOTO ALBUM