



InsideOut

April 2018
cupwedm.net



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Events

General Members Meeting

**Sat, April 7
6pm-8pm**

Union Office
18121 107ave

Pension Course

**Sat, April 28
9am-4pm**

Contact Union Office to apply.
Deadline April 20.

Contact CUPW Edmonton:

Phone: (780) 423-9000
 Toll-free: 1-877-423-CUPW (2879)
 Fax: (780) 423-2883

Visit us at:

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Our office hours are Monday through Friday from 8 am until 5 pm.
 Our part-time administrative assistant answers the phone from 9 am until 2 pm.

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President's Report

A Year in Review and the Year Ahead...

It's been a year now since you elected me as President of CUPW Local 730 Edmonton. It has been a year of finding my feet and following directions given to me by you. Before I go any further, I must thank both Greg McMaster and Bev Ray for all the guidance, support, and help they have given me as past presidents and activists in this local. They have made themselves available to answer any of the multitude of questions I have had over the last year and they continue to be here for all of us whenever we have need. They continuously show me exactly what solidarity looks like.

The first few months in office were fairly quiet as I figured out what my new role was. During that time, I did my best to make sure I got out to as many offices and depots as I could. I got to know many of you over the phone when returning your calls and meeting you in person during my visits to your workplaces.

Once Fall hit, I was very glad to have had the time to hear from many of you about your day-to-day concerns and the issues you face with your working conditions. I was able to use that knowledge gained from you to work with our executive and activists in consultations with Canada Post that occurred through September and well into December. I hope that the knowledge we gained in those consultations and the feedback we received from you afterwards will help us better represent you in the future. As always, we welcome input from members on any issues you may have with your workplaces and working conditions – it has always been my position that the best way to represent those who are affected is to have their direct input and involvement regarding changes the corporation wants to impose on work conditions. Our current Executive Committee fully supports this position as well.

During my quieter time last year as I tried to figure out what my role as president was and should be, I really started looking into issues that seem to be common throughout all workplaces in Canada Post. The one thing that seemed to surface again and again was the tox-



icity of some of our workplaces and the increasing workload placed on us.

Bringing these concerns to Rashpal Sehmbay (Health and Safety Officer) and the rest of our Executive Committee, we started really looking at what is going on in our workplaces, both to us on the workfloor and what Canada Post is doing in response to it. What we have been seeing is that if we dig below the surface and ask a lot of 'why's, we have found that Canada Post is the root of most, if not all, of the issues that we are dealing with. We have been researching Canada Post policies and procedure documents along with those under the Canada Labour Code and other areas. What we have seen is a pattern of policy and work procedure documents that contradict and conflict with each other.

“...we have found that Canada Post is the root of most, if not all, of the issues that we are dealing with.

The application of these policies and procedures has also been an issue. In most cases, they are somewhat applied, partially applied, or not applied at all. It's bad enough having policies and procedures that conflict, but it only compounds the issues and problems when they are not even applied in a consistent manner. Having witnessed this time and time again, it is no wonder there are so many issues that we are

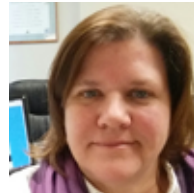
forced to deal with at Canada Post.

It's also no wonder that we get frustrated with our jobs and our co-workers. Some of us have had enough and we stop just making it work for Canada Post and focus on what we need to do to get through our shift. We resent it when our co-workers expect us to do more because they do. Some of us still believe that we must do our best and beyond in order to serve our customers, and we resent it when we see our co-workers not doing what we think they should be doing. We need to stop this. We need to start working and pulling together to make our workplaces and working conditions better and safer for everyone, but I cannot do that for you.

What I can do and what I am doing, along with the rest of our Executive Committee, is pushing back on these faulty policies and procedures. We are asking to be a part of the process when Canada Post has new and improved ideas for our work. We know that those who do the job are the best source of information and

ideas of what our work could look like and how well it could work – for us, for Canada Post, and for the public we serve.

Please note: I said we are asking. Without your support from the work floor, we will not have any more power than that of a mere ask. You are the ones that can help make my next year in office one of change and improvement for you. I want to do that for and with you. Let's make that happen.



*By Nancy Dodsworth, President CUPW
Edmonton Local*

Social Steward's Network

I would like to take this opportunity to talk about Social Stewards and the Social Steward Network. Social Stewards are being trained to help and assist our members who are facing a variety of concerns. Often our problems can leave us feeling isolated, and often our members are struggling and not sure of which direction to turn. Social Stewards are here to give our members another avenue to get assistance if it is needed.

In our Social Steward training, we discuss an abundance of topics: financial troubles, gambling addictions, drug and alcohol addictions, and physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse. We also covered other personal issues, such as LGBTQ issues, anorexia and bulimia, suicide, grieving, and mental health issues. A growing concern, for example, seems to be taking care of aging parents as we are now living longer. We also spent some time talking about workplace harassment, bullying, and the frustrations people are feeling at work.

Social Stewards are not counsellors, but we are here to help. We are here because we care and we are willing to listen, and we are willing to help our co-workers find some extra assistance for solving their problems. Coming to a Social Steward and any communications with a Social Steward will be held in the strictest confidence.

If you have any questions about the program, if you want more information, or if you need to talk to someone, there is a list of Social Stewards on your Union board or you can call the Union office at 780-423-9000. If you would like to become a Social Steward, please contact the Union office.

By Kathi Gouldie, Recording Secretary

Going Above and Beyond

Delivering Customer Service and Community in an Age of Automation

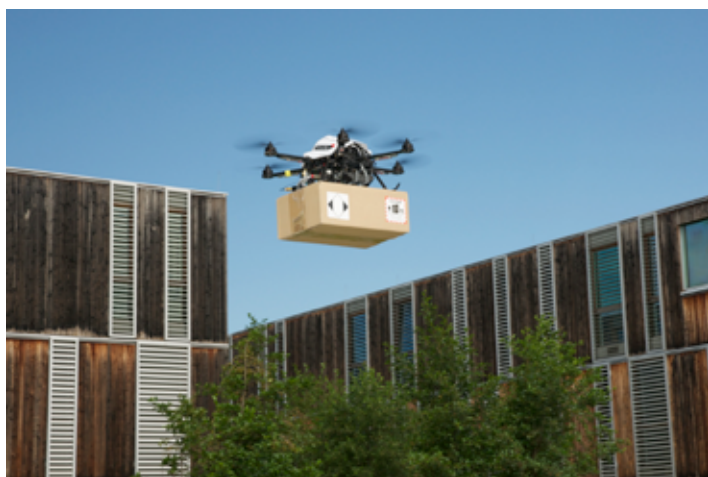
I would love to work for a company that values the importance of customer service. I mean, I do work for one – if you disrespect the clients, you will be counseled.

What I would really like is to work for a company that rewards great customer service. A company that, perhaps, asks their customers about the experience they have with their letter carrier and then provides positive encouragement and/or reward.

A company that actually nurtures and builds a culture of going above and beyond. That would be nice.

What I see instead is a very strict focus on meeting production demands. Every new letter carrier is made to feel rushed and borderline panicked until they finally adapt to the culture of running that is so prevalent in our depots. And so we pride ourselves in being quick at our jobs and we adapt our lives accordingly.

I am just curious, though: how well did our monstrous production work out for the porch pirates this season? Those parcel thieves that made their rounds stealing safe dropped parcels had a hay day and made the news all across the country.



Drone carrying a parcel.

As Chief Steward, I am aware of most discipline in the Edmonton local. A good majority is fundamentally related to failing to comply with policy due to making decisions based on getting done early. The strong emphasis on high production, the culture of running, is often in direct conflict with great customer service.

A cautionary tale: there is always a kingdom that has abundance. And there is always a kingdom looking to take that away, and historically it always does. For us, that threat will come in the form of automation. Amazon, for example, is testing drone parcel delivery. This seems impossible. But the seemingly impossible is exactly what causes kingdoms to fall. “I didn’t see that coming,” might have been the last sentiments of many felled empires.

Eventually automation will land on our doorstep. Our production will mean nothing. Our runners will be outrun everyday, seven days a week. Automation will do it cheaper and faster. But will they do it better?

“Eventually automation will land on our doorstep. Our production will mean nothing. Our runners will be outrun everyday, seven days a week.”

It’s not all doom and gloom. We do have the advantage of excellent customer service. The kind of service we already provide. How many times have you let a customer know their house keys are in the lock on the outside of the front door. How many times have we helped push a car out of deep snow? Assisted a lost pet? A distressed child? Commented on a lovely garden?

How many times have we delivered not just product but community?

That is our advantage and Canada Post would be wise to leverage it. They would be wise to encourage and nurture it. We would be wise to continue going above and beyond regardless of pressures to get done early. Five or ten minutes a day to help someone out, make someone smile, or engage in community, is something to take pride in.

And, by the way, customer service is a valid reason for overtime.



By Steve Cowtan, Chief Shop Steward of Depots/Stations, shop steward and letter carrier at Whitemud South

Fight for the Living, Mourn for the Dead

April 28: Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured on the Job



Monument in Miramichi, New Brunswick.



Monument in Grant Notley Park, Edmonton.

As I begin to write this article on March 13, 2018, I realize that almost a year has passed since I was elected to this position. Time sure seems to fly by, but the struggles and challenges continue on in trying to make our workplaces safer.

Looking back in history, we see that the province of Ontario proclaimed the first comprehensive workers compensation act (the Workmen's Compensation Act) in 1914. Nova Scotia followed in 1915, British Columbia in 1916, and New Brunswick and Alberta in 1918.

Labour organizations would continue pushing for change through collective actions and lobbying the government. And in February 1991, Parliament passed bill C-223, the Workers Mourning Day Act.

Similar legislation was passed by the provinces in the years following this decision and April 28 was adopted as the Day of Mourning for Workers Injured or Killed on the Job. Various monuments have been built in this country to signify the injuries and loss of life among workers. One such monument can be found in Miramichi, New Brunswick. Notice the significant wording: Fight for the living. Mourn for the dead.

The City of Edmonton also has a monument to commemorate this day. It is the monument to Alberta's Broken Families, which can be found in Grant Notley Park.

On April 28, Parliament and other government buildings across the country will place the Canadian flag at half-mast. On this day, people will participate in various ways. Some will light candles, lay a wreath, or hold moments of silence. May we reflect on all workers from various industries who have been injured, as well as those who never returned home after leaving for work that day.



By Rashpal Sehmy, Health and Safety Officer

Edmonton Local Executive Elections

Grievance Officer - Full Time Position
Polls Open Sat, April 7, 11:00am to 5:00pm
Union Office - 18121 107ave - Edmonton
Valid Gov ID Needed to Vote



Your Candidates for the Grievance Officer Position

Cathy Danard



I've been working at CPC since 1998, starting off in the Plant before moving on to the parcel hub in 2003, and then to Trans-Op as a 5-ton driver in 2013. I'm a long time shop steward and was elected as the Chief Steward for Transportation in 2016. In Spring of 2016 I was instrumental in the 5-ton restructure that gained us a new full-time position and an additional truck.

My time in the Grievance Office has been very rewarding! The challenge to get CPC to follow the collective agreement is, and will always be, an ongoing battle, one which I will always be ready to take on behalf of the members. I have been filing, collecting back-up and hearing your grievances at first level hearings for months now, and I'm very interested in further developing my knowledge with pre-arb and arbitration aspects of grievances.

We need determination, organization, perseverance, and the willingness to fight for what is rightfully ours! The time is now! The fight is real! I would appreciate the opportunity to continue this fight ours!

"In 2017, Cathy stepped up when the Local was in need, stepping in to the Grievance Office mid-term. Cathy has steadily picked up all aspects of the demanding job of Local Grievance Officer. She answers calls and returns Members' messages... At this perilous time, we need a conscientious and competent Local Grievance Officer, and Cathy Danard has proven herself to be just that. I would encourage Members to turn out to vote, and to vote for Cathy Danard!"

-Greg McMaster, Worker Advocate, Lifetime CUPW Member

Carl Hentzelt



My activism started as a relief carrier in Rosedale when I was subject to constant harassment from management. I didn't let it get me down and I didn't back down from doing the right thing... I still don't. I've learned that management will take advantage of people's lack of knowledge of the rules and the collective agreement, and so I've set out to learn as much of those rules as possible. I've joined four committees at the union for that reason. I'm very active and will continue to stand up for people who are being pushed around.

Running for the Grievance Officer position is the next logical step in my activism. I want to stand up for folks. I also want to show accountability to the membership. In the past, often when a member filed a grievance they wouldn't hear anything back until the Corporation sent them a letter denying their grievance. My plan is to increase communication so that members know their grievances have been received, filed with the corporation, when it was discussed with management, and what the basic discussion was.

As a detail-oriented person, I study and prepare for meetings that I go to. For example, before I joined the Temp Rights Committee, I was a part of the carrier on-boarding and training consultation with management. I drove our prep meeting, kept us on topic and built our agenda. When we met with management, I made sure that all of our discussion points were addressed before the meeting was finished. Getting this process right is important to me because I want our new members to be treated correctly and set up for success, not pushed around and made to feel like they are expendable.

Postal Banking Debate to Heat Up in Parliament



NDP MP Irene Mathyssen (London-Fanshawe) discusses NDP motion on postal banking. Supporters participating in the media conference included Gisele Bouvier (ACORN), Mike Palecek (CUPW), Brenda McAuley (CPAA), André Simard (Mayor, St. Roch des Aulnaies) and Karine Trudel (NDP MP for Jonquière).

Postal union and social justice leaders, along with a mayor on a mission, joined Member of Parliament Irene Mathyssen (NDP, London-Fanshawe) on Parliament Hill this morning for a press conference to put pressure on Members of Parliament to support postal banking in Canada.

Mathyssen, the NDP critic for Canada Post, recently presented a motion, M-166, calling for a committee to study and to recommend a plan for a federal postal banking system administered under the Canada Post Corporation. Debate on the motion begins tomorrow in the House of Commons.

Standing with Mathyssen during the press conference were Mike Palecek, National President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), Brenda McAuley, President, Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association, Gisele Bouvier, ACORN, and André Simard, Mayor of Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies in Quebec, whose community recently lost its banking services.

“We have been advocating for many years to bring back banking at the post office as a way to increase revenue at Canada Post while expanding its capacity to offer services that are both wanted and badly needed,” says Mike Palecek, CUPW President. “Thousands of rural municipalities and indigenous communities are without banking services but many have

post offices that could offer banking services.”

Postal banking is the provision of financial and banking services offered through the post office. It is not a radical idea. Postal banks already exist in many countries including the UK, France, New Zealand, Japan, India and more, and are used to create financial inclusion, promote economic development and generate revenue to preserve public postal services and jobs.

Canadians have an appetite for postal banking. Over 600 municipalities have passed resolutions that support postal banking and 63 percent of respondents to a 2013 Stratcom poll supported expanding revenue-generating services, including financial services such as bill payments, insurance and banking at Canada Post.

In January, the Federal Government finally made public its long-awaited vision for a renewed Canada Post, calling for expanded service options and alternative revenue streams.

“Postal banking fulfills the Government’s vision for Canada Post. It is profitable, sustainable, and provides accessible banking services to all Canadians. It is a win-win opportunity for the Government to better serve Canadians,” says Palecek.

Postal banking is an issue worth fighting for and it is included in CUPW’s bargaining demands in the current round of collective bargaining with Canada Post.



A bank for everyone

Support Postal Banking

Dear member of Parliament,

RE: Requesting your support for Motion M-166 on striking a committee to study the creation of a postal bank

I am writing to request your support for a motion (M-166) that has been tabled in the House of Commons that aims at studying and establishing a postal bank in Canada. Over the past three years, more than 600 municipalities have demonstrated their support for the creation of a postal bank by either adopting a resolution or writing to the federal government.

Thousands of rural municipalities, as well as Indigenous communities, do not have a bank, but many of them do have a post office that could provide financial services. As well, nearly two million Canadians desperately need an alternative to payday lenders. A postal bank could be that alternative.

Postal banks already exist in many parts of the world where they are used to increase financial inclusion, promote economic development and generate revenue to preserve public postal service and jobs. Canada had a successful postal bank until 1968. It's time to bring it back! Almost two out of every three respondents (63%) to a 2013 Stratcom poll supported Canada Post expanding revenue-generating services, including financial services like bill payments, insurance and banking. Canada needs a postal bank as an alternative to big banks.

Motion M-166 proposes the establishment of a committee aimed at studying various postal banking models used around the world, and at proposing a model for Canada.

For more information on postal banking, visit our website, at postalbanking.ca.

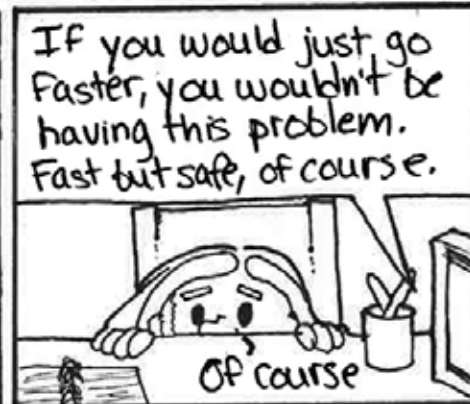
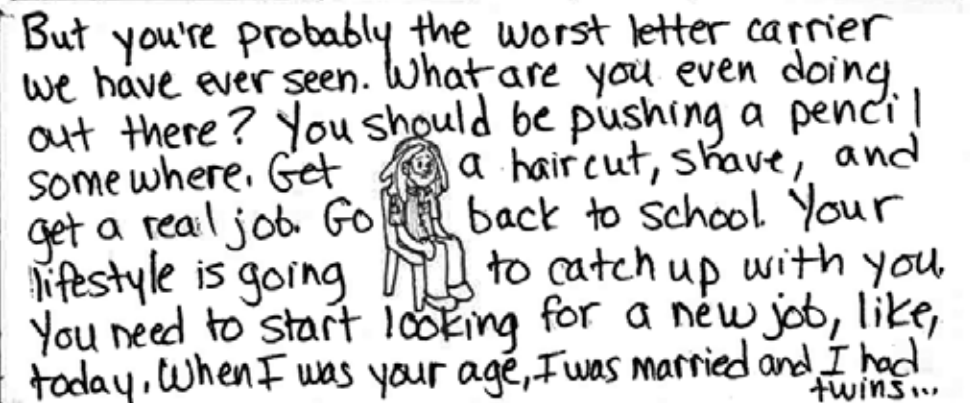
Yours truly,

(name):
(address):
(city/town):
(postal code):
(email):

**Please mail this letter to your
Member of Parliament.
No postage required.**



**House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6**



Kyle Turner, 2018

No Relief

Revisiting My First Few Months as a Relief Letter Carrier

This comic is about my first months as a letter carrier. When I finished drawing it, I was quite pleased because it had been a long time since I was inspired to do such a thing. Mostly because being a relief letter carrier has made me so tired that I just want to sit and do absolutely nothing when I'm not working. Shortly after that moment of pleasure, I felt a sting because while the overall situation as it appears is a work of fiction, the component parts are all completely true.

First, it is about being called into a supervisor's office for my first probationary report meeting. This situation actually happened, though I've met many letter carriers who have never had such a meeting or even saw a single report about their performance. I had one meeting, which is surely nothing of note. I also received three failing probationary reports all at once after my probationary period had ended, which is probably impressive in some way.

Second, it is also about the things supervisors actually said to me during those early days when I was struggling to learn how to do the job. The comments were so consistently negative that it made me wonder if management was playing a game where they tried to see how many new employees they could get to quit. Like maybe there was a sweet prize or monetary bonus in it. Or maybe the joy of bullying someone is an award in itself.

“The comments were so consistently negative that it made me wonder if management was playing a game where they tried to see how many new employees they could get to quit. Like maybe there was a sweet prize or monetary bonus in it. Or maybe the joy of bullying someone is an award in itself.

It's hard to know. And, in the end, I never asked.

I don't remember how long it took to receive a compliment. But by the time I did, I was so accustomed to the toxic atmosphere that the brief moment of repressive made me feel uneasy. It made me think, “What's your angle? What do you want from me?”

Again, it's hard to know and I didn't ask, but I imagine I was just experiencing someone being pleasant.

I slowly realized there was a problem with my environment if it could somehow make a compliment seem more out of place than harassment. Initially, I was too naive. I should have reported these things right away, but I would let these things sit and percolate for a bit before I truly realized what was said to me.

When I would mention it to co-workers, I would inevitably hear, “Dude, they can't talk to you like that.” Now if there was someone around who could have said that when it was happening, that would have been useful. Unfortunately, bullies often avoid having an audience; and in letter carrier training we were specifically told not to take a Shop Steward with us into our probationary meetings because we would risk seeming – I'm not sure what, like we were being too defensive, or we knew too much, or we were possibly going to be “problem employees,” because the meeting wasn't really that big of a deal, was it?

These experiences are what led me to become a Shop Steward, and I would encourage everyone to do the same. If you can't commit the time to being an official Shop Steward, at least consider doing the training in order to have a better sense of what is acceptable and where to find answers.

Part of me hopes that you can't relate to this particular series of panels. Another part of me is almost too certain that most postal workers can – I know I'm not the first and I'm painfully aware that I'm not the last. I do my best to keep my eyes and ears open, but it will take a larger force to truly change the environment of a workplace that has been so awful for so long.

Strangely, the awfulness has given me renewed energy to draw and make fun of my experiences. It is perhaps bittersweet that I won't likely have any shortage of material. There are even more recent experiences that I can draw on, which is a shame because who would think that after doing the job for almost three years that the experience could become more absurd?



By Kyle Turner, Editor, Shop Steward, and letter carrier at Rosedale.

Canada Post Workers Say Sexual Harassment Ignored by Management at Edmonton Mail Plant

Male Supervisor Allowed to Return to Work with Female Employees Who Had Filed Complaint Against Him



The Edmonton Mail Processing Plant employs approximately 650 members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.
(Peter Evans/CBC)

At first, Jessica thought her supervisor at Canada Post's Edmonton mail processing plant was trying to be friendly. He frequently complimented her appearance.

Over time, the comments became more and more sexual.

"It became really uncomfortable, and it was sexual harassment towards the end," said the postal worker.

"It made me feel not good enough. It made me feel like a sexual object. I didn't want to go to work."

Jessica says her workplace became unbearable. She filed an official complaint through the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) after her repeated complaints to management went unheeded.

Jessica is one of six female workers who filed complaints through the union in 2017 about the same supervisor.

Four complaints were investigated last March. The investigation found that the women were telling the truth, but that the supervisor's behaviour did not constitute sexual harassment.

Supervisor's behaviour worsened

After that, the supervisor was allowed to return to work with the women who had made the complaints.

His inappropriate behaviour only got worse, Jessica said.

Two new complaints were investigated in De-

cember. The second investigation found that the supervisor had engaged in sexual harassment in those cases.

“In March, we had sisters come forward,” said Nancy Dodsworth, president of the Edmonton CUPW local.

“Nothing happened. In December, more women were victimized because nothing happened in March.”

It is not clear what disciplinary action, if any, was taken against the supervisor.

Two of the six complainants have shared their stories with CBC News. Both sort letters and packages at the Edmonton mail processing plant at 121st Avenue and 149th Street.

CBC News is calling the women Jessica and Hannah to protect their true identities. Both risk losing their jobs because Canada Post required them to sign confidentiality agreements when the sexual harassment was investigated.

“I can confirm that the complaints were taken seriously, were investigated and action was taken to resolve the issue,” Canada Post spokesperson Aurélie Walsh wrote in an emailed statement.

Walsh said she could not provide further details out of respect for the privacy of the people involved in the investigations.

“*They made me feel bad about bringing it forward, and just swept it under the rug.*”

Escalating behaviour

Jessica and Hannah detailed how their supervisor’s behaviour became increasingly inappropriate over time.

“The supervisor would start saying sexual things to me about my body parts, sexual comments about things that he would like to do to me,” she said.

Hannah said the supervisor made sexual innuendos and propositioned her for sex.

She said his comments contributed to a toxic work environment inside the mail plant.

“It’s an environment of negativity, hostility,” she said. “There is a lot of uncomfortable feelings from staff and how they are treated by supervisors, management.”

Both women said they denounced the supervisor’s behaviour to management on multiple occasions.

“They made me feel bad about bringing it forward, and just swept it under the rug,” Jessica said. “Nothing was done, the behaviour just continued.”



Nancy Dodsworth, president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers Edmonton local, says Canada Post failed to provide a safe workplace. (Trevor Wilson/CBC)

‘I was appalled’

Four of the complaints were investigated in March 2017 by a Canada Post human rights officer. Interviews were conducted in person and over the phone by an officer based in Winnipeg.

The investigator concluded that the women were being truthful and that the supervisor had not followed Canada Post’s Code of Conduct, but that the comments did not constitute sexual harassment.

In three of the four findings, the officer wrote that “the investigation did not find any evidence that shows the conduct was persistent or repetitious or, whether the conduct led to adverse job-related consequences.”

Findings were reported to management. Managers allowed the supervisor to return to work, overseeing the same women who had made the complaints.

“I was appalled by the fact that they agreed with what occurred, they believed what I was saying, but they opted to keep him employed there,” said Hannah.

Dodsworth, the CUPW local president, was shocked by the decision.

“It sends the wrong message totally to people that are bullies, abusers and harassers, to return them to the same people that they victimized,” Dodsworth said. “That’s just not done. I’m still flabbergasted by it.”

Jessica said her work environment continued to deteriorate and carried over into her personal life. “It caused a lot of anxiety and stress. I wasn’t sleeping at night.”



The complainants and the supervisor worked together at the Edmonton mail processing plant (CBC)

Another round of complaints

In December, two new complaints were filed by female employees. The complaints were investigated by Canada Post's human rights officers.

This time, the investigators wrote in their findings that the supervisor's behaviour was "repetitious and persistent and unwelcome and sexual in nature."

They concluded that the supervisor "did engage in sexual harassment contrary to the No Discrimination/ No Harassment policy and the code of conduct."

CUPW does not know what disciplinary action was taken against the supervisor in response to the findings.

Hannah and Jessica have not seen him at work since December.

Jessica doesn't think firing the supervisor would be enough to change the culture at the Edmonton mail processing plant.

She is not convinced that the superiors who dismissed her complaints understand the severity of the harassment and how it affected the women involved.

"I think if management takes this seriously and says, 'Look, I don't want to have harassment in the workplace,' and makes that a priority, it would change," she said. "It all starts with management."

According to Hannah, Canada Post needs to accept responsibility for failing to provide a safe workplace.

"I believe the entire corporation as a whole needs to have some accountability held on their actions, and just how they conduct their business."

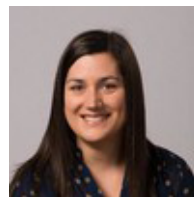
Hope for the future

Jessica and Hannah said sharing their stories about what happened gives them an opportunity to foster positive change.

"I am hoping to change workplace morale and workplace environment," said Jessica. "I want to go to work and not have the anxiety of 'What today?'"

Hannah said Canada Post has the potential to be a great employer, but that the relationship between staff and management has been damaged.

"There's some trust that's been broken there with most staff, and I think that needs to be repaired."



By Josee St-Onge, originally published on March 5, 2018 on cbc.ca.

Reprinted in full with permission from the author.

No One Will Save Us From Canada Post

Work Floor Empowerment is the Only Resistance Against a Toxic Employer

It is no secret that Canada Post has a harassment problem. From relief carriers refusing to report to certain Edmonton depots due to management causing emotional distress, to concerns of sexual harassment in the EMPP, there are no shortages of horror stories about our employer's inability to follow even their own anemic code of ethical workplace conduct. In Winnipeg, postal workers felt that harassment was such a problem in their worksites that they confronted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at a January townhall meeting. Trudeau seemed shocked by this information and, to his credit, apologized and committed to take action to make sure it stops. Assuming Trudeau was sincere in his intention, it would nonetheless be a mistake for postal workers to rely on him, just like it would be a mistake for us to expect Canada Post to voluntarily ensure dignity and emotional safety for its employees.

The workers in the EMPP are still trying to heal from a well-publicized crisis that saw a supervisor formally accused of six instances of sexual harassment. Not only did the supervisor retain his job, but he was kept on the same shift where the problems originated. To be absolutely clear, the company's internal March 2017 investigation found the accusers to be telling the truth, yet the company still felt the best course of action was to place the harasser back among his victims. The priorities of our employer are expressed by the reality we live on the work floor: if Canada Post sincerely cared about the well-being of postal workers, there would be no tolerance for this kind of behaviour at any level of the company.

Throughout all of this, our officers in the union hall have been very active, asking for workers to submit testimonials and witness statements of harassment or bullying, filing grievances, and persistently confronting the company for their behaviour. Their tireless efforts should be commended and recognized, but it must also be acknowledged that they, on their own, have very little leverage to meaningfully make the company do anything. They know it, but they continue to fight because doing nothing is not an option.



Workers attending a work floor meeting

Our government only cares about lip-service, our employer only cares about production, and no one cares more about postal workers than our union officers. Three different perspectives leading to exactly one result: no meaningful, positive change in our everyday material working conditions. A workplace completely free of harassment and bullying, as well as most other abuses of power, is absolutely possible, but that expectation must be collectively asserted from the workers themselves.

Imagine: the next time you witness someone working next to you on the processing line getting sexually harassed or if you see a relief letter carrier being ridiculed for not being as efficient as the route owner, that instead of that person suffering on their own, all of their co-workers surround that person and loudly challenge the behaviour of the offending supervisor. Imagine that instead of stopping there, everyone who witnessed this disgrace wrote a testimonial detailing what they directly witnessed and a petition denouncing the behaviour of that supervisor and demanding consequences was circulated to the rest of the work floor. Imagine an entire shift or carrier wave marching into a manager's office and declaring: "We are here to exercise our right to complain and express disgust in not only the violation of the Collective Agreement and your corporate conduct but of our basic dignity. Here is an extensive documentation of how one of your staff is making this a toxic workplace and here is a petition demanding that you take measures to correct this. You now have the op-

portunity to internally correct the matter and we will be watching to see if changes are made, to our satisfaction.”

Article 9.07 (“Rights of Employees to Complain”) of our Collective Agreement allows us to do this without fear of repercussion: “Both parties recognize that an employee, accompanied by a Union steward if he or she so wishes, has the right to discuss with his or her supervisor any question or complaint relating to his or her working conditions and conditions of employment, including those governed by the provisions of this agreement...”

As dramatic as this example sounds, there is a fairly recent precedent for it from right here in Edmonton. In 2011, the employer felt that instead of hiring more relief carriers that it could rely on excessive forced overtime to get the mail out. Long story short, the entire Edmonton carrier workforce revolted. Depots marched on their supervisors’ offices, petitions were submitted, demands were issued, and higher-tiered bosses were even brought in to be questioned and held accountable. Mass work floor and parking lot meetings became a weekly occurrence. A new committee was mobilized to coordinate citywide action and, most importantly, direct-orders from management to submit to forceback were outright refused on the grounds of violating health and safety.

The end result of this campaign? An unqualified surrender by the employer, an immediate hiring wave of new relief carriers, and the effective end to chronic forced overtime in Edmonton. Now, this paper is not legally allowed to condone any of the aforementioned activity, but this conflict showcases an important point: Canada Post systematically will never prioritize your well-being, but it can be cornered into begrudgingly improving our working conditions.

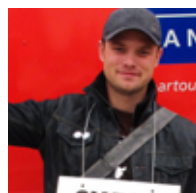
In truth, a perfectly by-the-book, legal, mass collective complaint accompanied by a petition is better than any authority figure seriously abusing their power deserves, but it is a relatively straightforward strategy that we have at our disposal that should be the first step in confronting conditions that have been shamefully permitted to persist. In order for our work floors to get the satisfaction we demand, we cannot allow ourselves to wait for a cavalry that will never arrive; by educating and organizing ourselves, we can become the change we want to see.

Understandably, becoming a Shop Steward can seem like an intimidating task. But the strength of the Union on the work floor manifests not only in its active Stewards but also in workers willing to educate themselves about their own rights and supporting their co-workers in times of conflict.

“In order for our work floors to get the satisfaction we demand, we cannot allow ourselves to wait for a cavalry that will never arrive...”

Now that we have a new officer, our Organizing Committee will be drastically shifting its strategy towards recruitment and mobilization. We are asking members to express what level of training they would like to receive and how much they are willing to commit to help organize their own workplace. Once enough workers have expressed interest for a particular course, we will run it as soon as possible after we find a date that accommodates those who have signed up. If interest maintains, we will keep running courses for as long as it takes.

Our Union’s administrative wing will never be able to empower its members. It can only offer opportunities for members to empower themselves. Now, more than ever, we need members who are interested in making a difference to step forward – not only because of the harassment epidemic and needing to show strength to create pressure in our current round of bargaining, but because Canada Post will inevitably find more ways to undermine our dignity.



By Roland Schmidt, Organizing Officer
Rosedale letter carrier and Shop Steward

UNION EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES!



Intro to CUPW and Unionism

Perfect for newer members, or for those just wanting to learn more about our union's democratic structure, how we function, our inspiring history and what basic rights are as a postal worker.

Taking Back the Workfloor

For those somewhat aware of their rights and those eager to make a difference in the workplace. Learn how to organize and develop workfloor strategies to fight back against the employer.

Basic Steward Training

The shop steward is a leader and advocate on the workfloor that is the first line of defense against bad bosses. Learn how to assert and support the rights won for all postal workers.

For questions or interest in any of these courses, please email **organize730@gmail.com** with the following info:

- full name
- phone #
- job title
- work location
- course(s) to take

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UNION**

**MAKES US
STRONG**