



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF CUPW 730 / FEBRUARY 2024

INSIDE OUT

Can Management endure
the HORRORS of...

The latest
INSIDE OUT
EDITION?!



Grrrrrr! Rawr!!
What if there's
a...a...COMIC?!



INSIDE OUT is the monthly publication of the Edmonton Local of CUPW.

This newsletter aspires to educate and inform members and affiliates about our union's activities, opportunities, and challenges, as well as to raise awareness regarding all things labour.

Opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily the official views of the Local.

The Communications Committee (responsible for this publication) is always interested in submissions of original articles, photographs, or illustrations. Prospective material must always concern CUPW or the labour movement, but submissions of general interest to the membership will also be considered.

All submissions for publication are subject to the approval of the Local President, and may be edited for brevity, clarity, etc.

To make a submission, or to get involved, contact the Communications Committee at communications730@gmail.com.

Communications Committee members:

Kyle Turner Raina Dakus
Wendy Crispin Natasha Fryzuk
Ryan Malmo-Harper
Nathan Lamarche

**EMPOWER
ORGANIZE
RESIST**



CONTENTS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 President's Report September 2023 - Devon Rundvall | 13 SSD is Misery |
| 6 The Only Way Forward Is To Strike - James Ball | 14 Labour Past and Present - Robert Hohnstein |
| 7 Striking for Newbies - Nathen | 15 December 06 |
| 8 Communications During Negotiations - Kyle Turner | 16 Why We Strike? Rashpal Sehmy |
| 9 Grievances During Strikes and Negotiations - Elizabeth Smallwood | 18 Word Search! |
| 10 The Story Behind 'Solidarity Forever' - Taylor Noakes | 19 Black History Month |
| 12 Preparing for a Strike - Karry Biri | |

LOCAL EXECUTIVE FULL-TIME OFFICERS



PRESIDENT
Devon Rundvall
union@cupwedm.net



SECRETARY-TREASURER
Karry Biri
Treasurer@cupwedm.net



GRIEVANCE
Elizabeth Smallwood
Grievance@cupwedm.net



HEALTH & SAFETY
Rashpal Sehmy
Health.Safety@cupwedm.net

LOCAL EXECUTIVE TABLE OFFICERS



COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
Kyle Turner
communications730@gmail.com



1ST VICE-PRESIDENT ORGANIZING
James Ball
organize730@gmail.com



2ND VICE-PRESIDENT EMP
Parminder Pannu
empp730@gmail.com



3RD VICE-PRESIDENT COLLECTIONS
Peter Hall
depots730@gmail.com



4TH VICE-PRESIDENT RSMC
Lennard Vis
rsmc730@gmail.com



5TH VICE-PRESIDENT AUXILIARY
Kathleen Mpulubusi
auxiliary730@gmail.com

ADDRESS

18121 107 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB
T5S 1K4

HOURS

Monday to Friday
7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed weekends

CONTACT

Office: (780) 423-9000
1 (877) 423-CUPW
Fax: (780) 423-2883



FEBRUARY PRESIDENT'S REPORT: ARE YOU READY TO STRIKE?

Here we are, folks. The RSMC contract has expired as of December 31st, 2023, and the Urban contract followed suit on January 31st. It's important to remember that even though they have expired, our members will have the right to the same working conditions, wages, and benefits as they had before expiry until there is a job action from our union or the employer.

Legally, under Canadian labour law, there is still a long process for either party to follow in order to perform a job action of any sort. There are months of legal proceedings that need to take place before we are in a position to legally strike.

The same rules apply to Canada Post, who can choose to lock us out just like they did in 2011. This action opened it up for the federal government to legislate us back to work, forcing a contract onto us that we never would have accepted through negotiations. We have been fighting to regain what we lost that year even since.

Many of our members have never been on strike. Those who have been, either with CUPW or another union, might not have fully understood what was going on. To get a better understanding of what a strike is, we need to look back at where they began.

The Industrial Revolution brought a countless number of workers off the farms and pushed them into awful mining and factory jobs. The work was dangerous and the pay was pitiful. The employers had no regard for the individual worker because they could replace them with the steady stream of unskilled labour that was flooding into the cities from the countryside.

“Postal workers have an opportunity in 2024. With our contracts expired, we are in a position to make some drastic changes. Not only within Canada Post, but to this country. It's time that we re-establish Canada Post as a part of the societal foundation of Canada.”

Workers realized that the only thing that would change this power imbalance would be for them to work together and be united against the

boss. This is what we mean when we say “organize.” This era was incredibly tumultuous and often violent. In order to force the employers to address the low pay, long hours, and often deadly working conditions, workers would stop working and shut down the factories and mines.

This is what we call a strike. The response from the employers was often violent. With hired muscle or even the police, the business class would try to beat workers into submission. Sometimes the violence or threats worked. However, over time, worker power grew. They fought for fair wages, safe working conditions, and an eight hour work day. The list of victories achieved by unions is long and it stretches across the 20th century.

In this time, unions became more structured and, in Canada, both sides eventually accepted the Rand Formula for the sake of stability. With it, a new relationship between workers and their employers was created. A more structured mechanism was formed to deal with workplace issues. Instead of workers dealing directly with their managers to solve the problems – sometimes with a wildcat strike – workers were told to file a grievance and allow “experts” in labour relations and case law to deal with the problems.

Still, to this day, workers have to wait until their contract expires in order to exert their power to change their working conditions and contract. Often this is done on a picket line. Even then, they must navigate multiple legal hurdles.

The result of this has been that worker's rights and benefits have been slipping for decades. There are many sources that you can access to learn more about this with a simple Google search (“effects of neoliberalism” or “the importance of unions”). I'd suggest starting with some articles from Briarpatch Magazine or the Council of Canadians. I'd also recommend watching some very funny John Oliver videos on this subject.

I share all this so that we have a basic understanding of where we are today. Before we discuss what it is going to take to improve the working conditions for postal workers across Canada, we need to understand what needs to change.

The first and most glaring issue is wages. Compensation for postal workers has been slipping for years. When inflation is sitting at around 8% and we get a 2% wage increase, the net result is a 6% reduction. Money isn't the only issue that we are facing and there are over 2,000 demands that our National Executive Board received from members. While wages, benefits, and time are always the big issues, the list includes everything from uniforms to a worker-run post office.

I talk to members everyday. Plant workers are upset about staffing, or lack thereof. Letter Carriers are worried about their route growing beyond what is possible to complete in a day. The RSMCs need to figure out how to pay for gas just to deliver the mail. One thing they all have in common is an employer that seems more concerned with power than they are with the wellbeing of their employees and the longevity of the company.

CUPW has been fighting to keep this company afloat with the Delivering Community Power (DeCoPo) program. If Canada Post was serious about our jobs, they would have adopted postal banking and entire suite of DeCoPo services. Instead, we are going to have to force them to

make the changes. By adopting these changes, Canada Post will set itself apart as a fully Canadian institution. Canada Post is intended to be a federal service for the benefit of all Canadians, not an organization that subsidizes Amazon and other mega corporations as they dismantle the middle class.

Two years ago, our union accepted a contract that was sold to us as a stop gap to help us recover from the pandemic. It was intended to give us better language regarding Group 1 staffing, a committee to look into RSMC pay, and a door into postal banking. After two years, the staffing language has appeared to be useless to stop the bleed of Group 1 positions; there's been zero traction for the RSMC hour rate; and the big bank has pulled out of the financial services contract.

This terrible contract was the most recent example highlighting that workers are under attack. However, after decades of corporate welfare, bank bailouts, and governments hellbent on destroying workers, it would seem that workers are starting to wake up. In the last few years, workers have seen an unjust pandemic response, inflation that's through the roof, and record high corporate profits. In 2023, throughout North America, we saw workers fighting back. The correlation between workers organizing and victory was apparent: the unions that were willing to fight won.

Now it's our turn. Postal workers have an opportunity in 2024. With our contracts expired, we are in a position to make some drastic changes. Not only within Canada Post, but to this country. It's time that we re-establish Canada Post as a part of the societal foundation of Canada. After all, we were conceived as a service to Canadians. The fruition of DeCoPo will enable Canada Post to stay that way – providing world class service to Canadians and good paying union jobs for their workers.

The big banks will be lobbying against this. The business class will resist and fight us. But it is not them that will decide if we win. It is you and your coworkers. Our own leadership has put the onus on rank-and-file members. Will the workfloors organize? Will they buy into the

Building Worker Power campaign? Will they show up to a strike vote? Will they walk a picket line? The answer to these questions has a greater impact on our contract negotiations than if the federal government will legislate us back to work.

In the coming months, there will be ample opportunities to get involved. Sign the federal petition, attend a union educational, hold a workfloor meeting to talk about negotiations, blow a whistle coming back from break, hold a practice picket over lunch, or march on the boss to tell them you want a raise. One of the biggest steps would be to ensure your entire facility comes to the strike vote. You will have a chance to make an impact.

If you want to improve staffing, if you want to stop SSD, if you want a raise – it all comes down to one statement: you are the union. 



THE ONLY WAY FORWARD IS STRIKE

By James Ball, 1st Vice-President/Organizing Officer

We must prepare for a strike if we are going to avoid one. Our union has struggled these past decades to achieve the goals the membership has set. The government and corporate media have done a good job of alienating the membership from its union.

The only way forward is Strike. You need to find the solidarity in you to stand with others in their struggle. I was recently the recipient of a member's venting. They told me that there was a time when the workforce was without supervisors because we, the union, ran the workforce. We didn't need them and we most certainly weren't afraid of them. Venting is something we do when we are frustrated. Now we need a solution. What else did they do back when we ran the workforce? They stuck together. They tackled their problems as a group. They put the demands on management. When management tried to intimidate people, the members came together and put a stop to it. It's not magic. It's teamwork.

The way it stands at time of writing is that you have elected leadership in the Edmonton Local who want to help you return to that strength. In addition, the action plan set out by the National Convention is to empower the members to lead the way with the Building Worker Power campaign. It was a unanimous vote by the delegates. There is a structure that is being built to support a return of our union to power. All you have to do is participate.

This past year, the CUPE(OSBCU) defied back to work legislation in Ontario and won. They had a strong membership participation at their strike vote. If you want to win you will need to participate in that democracy. We need an 80% turnout at the strike vote. There is nothing more important than for the members to use their democratic power. A high participation in the strike vote could avoid a strike altogether. A low turnout virtually guarantees a strike.

Without the power of the membership using their democratic vote we have no power at the bargaining table. We are backed into the corner but the elected union leadership is doing what

it can with the tools it has. The membership needs to start engaging with the national action plan and attend votes to get us off the proverbial ropes and give the negotiators a fighting chance, because when one side is backed into a corner it's not a negotiation, it's extortion.

If you only do one thing during the negotiations, vote. That's the minimum. Other easy tasks are to sign petitions. The national petition demanding the government stay out of negotiations is an example. There is no risk to signing it and it risks everything not to sign it. There will be petitions on your workforces to inform management of the demands on your workforce. Sign them. There may be greater actions with higher risk but you can make that choice when you get there. If we don't do these things you will be forced to walk a picket line or accept rollbacks.

The only way forward is strike!

We need to win this time. Doug Ettinger (CEO) and his army of Vice Presidents have failed this company year after year. The leadership of this company is more interested in crushing you than making this a success and transitioning us into the future. While Canada Post purchases Carbon Credits, many of us work in buildings from the middle of last century with drafty windows, inefficient heating and cooling systems, and high costs of maintenance. Could you imagine how much money Canada post would have to dump into Carbon Credits if they actually had accountability for the RSMC vehicles? We'd be better off investing in new facilities with modern standards. We could also build the new facilities to become community hubs with postal banks, internet access, electric chargers, solar panels. CPC executives look like they are managing a company in hospice care instead of leading us to the future. We need innovative management with a plan to expand into additional fields of revenue. You know what? We do that. CUPW has a plan to expand the post office and make it financially sustainable. It's called Delivering Community Power. There's a plan to implement a lot of the things mentioned above and more. Time for the CPC executive to resign and give way to new leaders. We are going to

have to take it from them.

The only way to get a financially sustainable post office is to strike. Canada Post and the owners, the Canadian Government, will not let us interfere in the profit of the Canadian private banking system. The most profitable banking system in the world. We need real competition in the banking system and the post office, with more locations than Tim Hortons, is in a prime position to do it.

The current minority government is unpopular and is being propped up by an agreement with another party. One of the conditions of that agreement is no use of back to work legislation. We have witnessed the PSAC tax workers strike and the ILWU port workers strikes go on without back to work legislation. I've mentioned it once before in this article that the CUPE(OSBCU) strike faced back to work legislation and defeated the legislation in one day of striking. They did that because members got engaged and came out to vote and came out to strike. There is no better time for us to reinvent the post office to secure the future of Canada Post. The only way to win is to strike.

Some resolutions for the new year.

-“The union” is all of us. It is not the local office or the shop steward or a national office or some “other”. It is us. WE are all a union.

-The membership is the ultimate authority. That also means the membership is accountable for itself. Grievances are only one tool in the union toolbox. Using our rights collectively as a group is a much more powerful tool, but it involves risk. We must be clear and take the time to communicate with each other, understand our problems, understand the risks of confronting management, and create clear achievable goals for management to follow. We must also create clear achievable goals for our local. We must do it calmly, controlled, and with purpose.

-Blame management for their failures, not the other members. Management is responsible for the performance and discipline of all employees. If you feel that management is targeting you and

letting others be "slackers," that's management's failure. Don't blame the other worker. Time to make management accountable.

-Forgive yourself. Forgive others. It's time for us to move forward. Management relies on and encourages conflict on the workforce. They are playing you. Time to forgive and move forward. Find people who have the same problems and are willing to work towards a common objective. Forgive members who are bitter and move forward with those who want a better workplace.

-Don't give up. There are no shortcuts here. The road is long, but people have started the groundwork on the foundation of harnessing our true

union power. We will have to undergo a culture change from the expectation of service by a few to the strength of action by many. Patience and perseverance will give us what we need.

Our time is short. From the expiry of the contract to a potential strike/lockout is a timeframe of less than 90 days. On the strike side, you will be notified and you will participate in a vote to grant the negotiating body to use tactics up to and including a full strike. The corporation will only require a 72 hour notice from the previously mentioned timeline.

We can do this. We can win this.



STRIKING FOR NEWBIES

By Nathen from EDDD

You have recently started working at Canada Post. You're still a temporary employee and you have paid your \$5, so you are a member in good standing. The contract between the Canada Post Corporation and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers expires January 31st (and the RSMC contract expired at the end of December), and you're wondering what you should do or what will happen to you on February 1st.

Simply put, you do what us permanent employees do. Belonging to a union, negotiating a contract with the employer, and, if all else fails, going on strike, are all legal. On February 1st, your rate of pay, benefits, and hours of work all stay the same and will continue, for however long, until we collectively ratify a new contract, or we obtain the right to strike, or the employer obtains the right to lock us out.

In the event of a strike, you have options:

- 1) walk the picket line and get strike pay;
- 2) stay home; or
- 3) get another job temporarily to tie you over.

Either way, we are all in this together.

COMMUNICATIONS DURING NEGOTIATIONS

By Kyle Turner, Communications Officer

About this Issue

Several months ago, the Communications Committee was asked to dedicate an issue of the InsideOut to talking about strikes. By the time you read this, the Urban and RSMC collective agreements will have expired, so it makes sense to cover this.

This does not mean we are going on strike immediately, but this is the first step in a longer process. We will do our best to spread the word about a strike vote if and when such a vote is deemed necessary.

Until then, there is no harm in being prepared for that outcome. New or old to the post office, we hope this issue can provide some insight into what the next year has in store for us.

Communications During Negotiations

In early December of 2023, shortly after negotiations officially started, management at one location decided to collect our newsletter, throw it in the garbage, and refuse to return them to a Shop Steward. In Edmonton, it is management's position that the newsletter is a personal item and anything not issued by the Corporation will be thrown out. I'm not sure of the details, but apparently something happened 3-years ago and ever since this has been the stance on our newsletter.

Of course, the Corporation has the Right to Manage, and if they see it fit to spend that much time and energy on our newsletter, they are allowed to do that. I'm sure there are more pressing matters to attend to. Historically, workers talking to each other about work and sharing information with each other is always taken as a threat, and I don't think times have changed. Is this exaggerating the situation? I don't know. The InsideOut is a publication that is read by postal workers across the country. It has also won multiple awards from the Canadian Association of Labour Media, continuing a past tradition in the Edmonton Local.

Luckily, in my role as a letter carrier, I'm not paid to think. So I'll never have to struggle with the question of whether it was a valuable use of corporate

resources to destroy an award-winning, worker-made publication. In my role as a Shop Steward and Communications Officer, though, I get to think about all kinds of things. There are two things I'd like to focus on: communications from our Local union office and communications from the employer during the upcoming period of negotiations.

Communication From Our Local Union

During negotiations, a strike, or a lockout, communication from our union is extremely important. Following the strike in 2018, the recurring complaint that I heard was that there wasn't enough communication. I was a relatively new Shop Steward at that point and also new to union activism, so I only vaguely understood the criticism. I put every notice on the bulletin board – wasn't that enough?

No, it wasn't. Again, one of the most frightening things for an employer to witness is workers who talk to each other about work. You don't need to be a Shop Steward, though – anyone can take a bulletin and inform the work floor about it. It takes a certain amount of guts or frustration to take that initial step, but I promise you it gets easier with practice and if people are willing to share the work.

When it comes to the Local office, I think there have been lots of positive changes to how we get information out. Of course, there are still bulletin boards being updated and newsletters being produced and distributed. We have more active work floors that have shown their willingness to act and stand together. We also have weekly email blasts that we use to share news and information, as well as a frequently updated website.

This time, we are going to use an automated texting service to spread the word about a strike vote, a strike, or a lockout. Because of this, it is important that your contact information be up to date with our Local office.

Communications From the Employer

When it comes time to communicate during the negotiation period, you can expect to be bombarded with bulletins from the employer. Whether or not it's the intention, the effect of this is to undermine our Collective Agreement

and our negotiation committee. If you were around for the 2018 strike, you would have had the chance to see this: management puts out a bulletin outlining the Corporation's latest offer, which usually includes a signing bonus, and members become frustrated that they're not being allowed to vote on the offer.

It's OK to disagree and we can have those conversations, but this is not how our union is structured or designed to handle negotiations. Our demands come from the local level. They are proposed and voted on at a general membership meeting. If they pass, they then get voted on at a Regional Conference. From there, they are worked out at the National level and given to the negotiation committee. If the negotiation committee is given an offer that reasonably matches our demands, that offer will be taken to the membership to be voted on. If it doesn't, then it won't.

It's also a violation of Article 3.01 of our collective agreements, which outlines that the Corporation recognizes that the Canadian Union of Postal Workers is the sole and exclusive bargaining agent for us. Now, as members of CUPW we do make up the union, but through our democratic processes we've also voted on our National Constitution, which outlines how negotiations work within our union.

This is all to say that the Corporation negotiates with our negotiators, not with individual workers on the work floor. We're stronger together. Of course, if you would like to be involved with negotiations, there are calls for applications to be on the negotiation committees months before negotiations start – so keep checking the bulletin boards or the National website (www.cupw.ca).

Conclusion

In my time being active with CUPW, we have worked hard to improve communications at the Local level. If you have any concerns or suggestions, you are welcome to reach out to us and let us know. Otherwise, check the bulletin boards, sign up for the weekly emails, and check our Local website for the most up-to-date information. Most importantly, make sure your contact information has been updated with the

Local office.

The Corporation basically has a captive audience and a seemingly-endless budget that it will not hesitate to use to try to weaken our union and give us a bad deal. We also have the fact that communication from our union will actively be thrown out, but that just means we need to improve our delivery.

All of this is, of course, nothing new in the history of the struggle against the employer.

Stay educated, talk to your coworkers, and let's not take the bait. 



GRIEVANCES DURING STRIKES AND NEGOTIATIONS

By Elizabeth Smallwood, Grievance Officer

When we go on strike, the employer may take action to amend our working conditions. This is permitted, as the collective agreement will be expired if and when we serve strike notice. This would affect article 9 of the collective agreement. The employer will notify the Union of new working conditions, but despite this, we will have to continue filing grievances as if the collective agreement were still in effect, including any discipline and discharge situations.

During this time, grievances would have no legal consequence, since the collective agreement will no longer be in effect. However, we need to protect members' rights in the event that special legislation be adopted that reinstates the collective agreement retroactively, or should an agreement to renew the collective agreement include a back-to-work protocol allowing the Union to submit all disciplinary measures, discharges or other issues for resolution. Grievances would need to still be submitted within 25 working days of the violation.

In the event that there is not a call for retroactive application of the collective agreement, and if the Union is not able to obtain back-to-work protocol where the grievances would have no legal basis, members would have to file a CIRB complaint under section 97 of the Labour Code if such sanctions were related to union activities, as this would constitute an unfair labour practice within the meaning of the Code. If this happens, it is very important that all grievances are properly documented since the information could be used if a complaint is filed under the Code. In cases of discharge, a complaint could be filed under section 240, Part III of the Labour Code within 90 days following the incident.

In both cases, there would be 3 months to file a complaint, and if you're in a situation of discipline or discharge during a strike period, the first step would be to contact the local union office. 

THE STORY BEHIND "SOLIDARITY FOREVER"

By Taylor C. Noakes

From Jacobin.com Jan 15, 2024

<https://jacobin.com/2024/01/solidarity-forever-iww-labor-songs>

The iconic labor song "Solidarity Forever" turns 109 years old today. Written in defiance of early 20th-century oppression, it railed against the forces that "would lash us into serfdom" with the abiding counsel that the "union makes us strong."

In an era where actual labor songs — of the sort popularized by Pete Seeger in the 1940s — are in short supply, Rage Against the Machine has become the quintessential representative of "protest music." This is despite the fact that "Sleep Now in the Fire" is now over twenty years old. One could make the case that we are long overdue for more overtly pro-union, pro-worker anthems.

In a tragic instance of "the more things change, the more they stay the same," we likely couldn't find a more serviceable tune than one of the mainstays of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) trade union songbook. "Solidarity Forever" still resonates, even at 109 years old.

The song's lyrics, referencing the "untold millions" who "stand outcast and starving," might lead one to assume that the song was composed at the height of the Great Depression. But the fact that it was composed about fifteen years before the stock market crash of 1929 highlights that the oppression and hardship experienced by the American worker transcended the confines of the worst general economic crisis the nation faced in the twentieth century.

The song's enduring relevance, mirroring the hardships and oppression experienced by millions of Americans today, underscores both its timelessness and universal message. Unfortunately, it also reminds us that many of the battles fought over a century ago have yet to be won.

Ralph Chaplin crafted the lyrics over the course of several years in the mid-1910s, finalizing them on January 15, 1915. Chaplin set the lyrics to the melody of "John Brown's Body," a popular Union marching song from the Civil War. Notably, Chaplin completed the song just six months before the execution of fellow IWW songwriter Joe Hill, credited with coining the term "pie in the sky" in his song "The Preacher and the Slave."

" 'Solidarity Forever' serves as a stark reminder that the fight is still far from over, and too much ground has been lost over the last forty years. "

Chaplin began writing the song three years earlier, while working as a journalist covering the Paint Creek–Cabin Creek Strike of 1912. The strike marked one of several bloody confrontations between striking workers and hired thugs over a roughly decade-long period known as the Mine Wars. The Mine Wars, in turn, were part of the broader Coal Wars, a series of labor conflicts in coal mining dating back to the 1870s.

In a tragically familiar tale, the strike, lasting from April 18, 1912, through July 1913, ended in considerable violence and suffering. While historical records note around fifty casualties on both sides, many more among the striking miners and their families are believed to have

succumbed to malnutrition and starvation. The strike ranks as one of the most violent labor conflicts in American history, though it is somewhat overshadowed by later conflicts like the Battle of Blair Mountain and the Battle of Matewan (also known as the Matewan Massacre).

'Solidarity Forever' serves as a stark reminder that the fight is still far from over, and too much ground has been lost over the last forty years.

At the heart of the conflict was a difference of just two-and-a-half cents. The miners of the forty-one unionized Paint Creek mines received two-and-a-half cents less per ton of coal mined compared to their counterparts in Kanawha County, West Virginia. If the mine operators agreed to the terms, it would have cost about fifteen cents per miner per day (equivalent to just over \$30 in current dollars).

The miners' other demands were all quite reasonable as well: recognition of their union, respect of workers' rights to free speech and freedom of assembly, fair payment for the coal they mined (with the right to independently verify weights measured and scales used), and the elimination of rules forcing miners to spend their pay at company stores.

Rather than agree to these reasonable terms, the mine operators chose violence, hiring the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency to provide three hundred armed guards who quickly set up fortifications with machine gun posts. In response, Socialist Party activists sent the miners one thousand rifles and fifty thousand rounds of ammunition. Reciprocal acts of violence and sabotage became the norm. When state troops were called in to restore order and impose martial

law, they disarmed the striking miners and carried out mass arrests.

"Solidarity Forever" was born of in this violent chapter of American labor history. Its subsequent popularity left Chaplin with serious misgivings, particularly due to what he perceived as the co-optation of the American labor movement. He was particularly leery about the song's adoption by the AFL-CIO, which many Wobblies considered too conservative. Chaplin spelled out his misgivings about both the song and the movement it was born out of in a 1968 article for American West.

Despite these reservations, Chaplin's lyrics remain impactful today because the fight for working people isn't over. The United States is still controlled by the "greedy parasite who would lash us into serfdom and would crush us with his might." Child labor, once believed to have been eradicated through the militant labor struggles of a century ago, has reared its ugly head

once more. Government remains passive and unconcerned about the plight of the working class, and issues like prison labor, flagrant workers' rights violations, and abusive union-busting policies persist. Homeless encampments of working poor further highlight that, from the vantage point of an early twentieth-century militant labor activist, the America of 2024 wouldn't seem all that unfamiliar.

Recent successes in labor organizing are undeniably inspiring, especially considering the opposition such efforts have faced. But the crisis of labor so aptly described in "Solidarity Forever" serves as a stark reminder that the fight is still far from over, and too much ground has been lost over the last forty years.

The key to understanding the potency highlighted in "Solidarity Forever" — and the reason it still serves as a beacon of hope for the future — lies in the song's final verse:

*In our hands is placed a power
greater than their hoarded gold
Greater than the might of armies,
magnified a thousand-fold
We can bring to birth a new world
from the ashes of the old
For the union makes us strong*

For Chaplin, the point wasn't simply a New Deal or a Great Society, but a workers' utopia. Lofty though it may sound now, such a goal is still worth fighting for. ✈️



Joseph J. Ettor, who had been arrested in 1912, giving a speech to barbers on strike. (Wikimedia Commons)

PREPARING FOR A STRIKE

By Karry Biri, Secretary Treasurer

Adapted from "when the paycheck stops" from the United Way Labour Department 2017

With the possibility of a strike happening in the near future, there are some things that you can do to help lessen the stress and financial hardship that is bound to occur. This is a list of thoughts and suggestions that have come from a document that was prepared for CUPW Edmonton by the Edmonton United Way Labour Department. For the most part, the information listed will be useful if the strike is a country wide strike, not a rotating one.

Prior to the strike:

- Make sure your spouse/partner is aware of the impending strike and that there will be the potential of a shortage to the family income. This will affect your family, and everyone needs to be aware of it and somewhat prepared.
- If you do not already have one, create a family budget. This will make you aware of the expenses and your monthly income. It could give you an idea on what you will need to prioritize when/if a strike occurs.

Housing:

- If you rent, check what your rights are and what the landlord's rights are under provincial legislation.
- If there are issues with paying your rent because of the strike, try to make arrangements with your landlord. Sometimes, being up front with the fact that you are on strike and may only be able to pay part of the rent, could delay any legal proceedings.
- If you own your home, your mortgage lender has more rights than all other creditors.
- Make arrangements with the lender (bank, etc.) if you think there could be an issue with paying your mortgage.
- Sometimes, lenders will work with you in regards to arranging a payment break or smaller payment. It all depends on your lender.

Utilities:

- These include electricity, gas, telephone, internet, etc.
- It is very difficult (if not impossible) to make special arrangements with utility companies. Often, utilities are owned by monopolies. If you are late with payments, there is the possibility they will cut off service and then make you pay a reconnection fee after you have paid off most of the amount owing.

Loans:

- Monthly loan payments are low on the list of priorities. They should be considered only after food, housing, and utilities are paid.
- Let your lender know that you will not be able to make any payments during the strike. Be upfront and honest with the lender and stay in contact with them advising them of what is going on.
- It is suggested that you do not sign a new contract or refinance because there is the possibility that the interest rates

could be higher.

- If you have a co-signer for your loan, advise them of what is going on and ask them not to pay the loan if the lender asks them too. It is best to let the co-signer know that this is only temporary and you will be resuming payments after the strike is over.
- If you are unable to pay all of the loan payment, it is best not to pay at all. Some lenders will ask that you pay just the interest. It is suggested not to do this as that money would be better served elsewhere (food, utilities, and housing).

Purchase Loans

- Loans to buy specific things on credit (vehicle, furniture, etc.) are called purchase loans. In some contracts, the items remain the property of the creditor.
- If payments are late, the creditor can:
 - Demand late payments be made.
 - Demand payment of the whole debt if this is included in the contract.
 - Repossess the purchased item.
 - In most provinces, the creditor must advise you, in writing, of their intentions. There is a time frame they must follow prior to exercising their rights.
- You can call the creditor and let them know what is going on, and perhaps they may be able to make payment arrangements
- Unfortunately, if you have received notice and are unable to pay, you must return the item to the creditor.

Credit Cards

- While on strike, it is suggested that you do not use credit cards unless absolutely necessary.
- The interest rates on credit cards are usually higher than loans from banks.

Legal Proceedings (for default on Loan)

- Prior to legal proceedings against you, a creditor has to use the services of a lawyer and send you a "court document." When this happens, it must be taken seriously.
- Letters from credit bureaus or collection agencies do not have legal "clout." They cannot take you to court, they are just a liaison between you and the creditor.
- However if you receive a lawyer's letter, arrangements must be made immediately with the lawyer regarding additional delays or reduced payments.

After a strike:

- Once you are back at work, all the creditors that you have put off will begin to harass you for payment.
- Be sure to stay in contact with the creditors, and if needed, seek support from credit counseling agencies such as Money Mentors.



SSD IS MISERY

By Rozina Khan (Local 730), Brooke Backus (Local 740), Greg Campbell (Local 814), and Stephanie Bourque (Local 730)

SSD, June 7th is the date. Where clause 38.02 was violated. Taken from the letter carriers and given to the routers. All it took was an arbitrator to reject our national grievance.

SSD's imposed on me,

I did not have a say,

The corporation tells me,

That it's going to be this way.

With multi bundles, heavy bags,

And delivering in the dark,

They claim to care about mental health,

While completely missing the mark.

The days are getting longer,

And life is far too short,

I didn't sign away my life,

To sort and sort and sort.

My Family is growing,

And I am missing out,

I am spending too much time,

Delivering my route.

My health and safety are important,

But not through corporate eyes,

They justify their actions,

with discipline and lies.

The arbitrator hurt us,

Ruled against us once again,

They're in bed with the boss,

So clearly not our friend.

Speaking with my union members,

They all agree that it's not right,

But if we want to stop it,

WE'LL HAVE TO STAND AND FIGHT!

LABOUR PAST & PRESENT

STRIKE 1965

By Robert Hohnstein

Canadian postal workers did not always have a union and it was only through a direct confrontation with the government via an illegal wildcat strike that CUPW was founded and postal workers learned of the power they had.

Prior to 1965, Canadian postal workers had associations rather than unions; the main two being the Canadian Postal Employee Association (CPEA) which represented plant workers and the Federated Association of Letter Carriers (FALC). These associations had no right to bargain, no right to strike, and had no spine to which to stand up against Canada Post (which at the time was directly managed by the Canadian government). In the first years of the 1960's the Conservative Diefenbaker government had implemented a harsh austerity program of wage freezes and job cuts. When the liberal minority government of Lester Pearson came to power in 1963 they merely handed out crumbs in the form of a \$310-360 increase in annual salaries.

“ On July 22nd 1965, 80% of all postal workers across Canada audaciously walked out and took to the picket line in an illegal strike demanding a raise of \$660 for an annual salary increase. ”

The conditions on the workforce were no better. Sexual harassment against women workers was rampant. Seniority rights were completely disregarded with management granting things based on favoritism. It was joked among workers that if you wanted to transfer sections or shifts you had to do a bad job in hopes the supervisor would grant the transfer. They had observation galleries everywhere in Canada Post facilities to watch the workers, even in the bathrooms! There were many problems in regards to health & safety,

vacation requests, discipline, etc. The list is not exhaustive.

Tensions and anger were mounting. One fateful day in 1965 management issued a decree from Ottawa that postal workers were not allowed to sit in their chairs for the first hour and a half of their shift. Postal workers had enough. All the problems had been compounding and no raise was yet announced by the government since the previous one in 1963. Workers in Montreal were the first to move. Both plant workers and letter carriers met up together and demanded their respective locals to declare a 24 hour strike notice. This was agreed upon, but the strike deadline was extended by 3 days. In that time the Montreal leadership contacted as many other locals as they could to get postal workers prepared for a very short-notice wildcat strike.

On July 22nd 1965, 80% of all postal workers across Canada audaciously walked out and took to the picket line in an illegal strike demanding a raise of \$660 for an annual salary increase. The national leadership of these postal associations tried to strike break their own membership, telling them that their strike was unconstitutional and they had no strike mandate. The Montreal leadership pointed to the window and stated “Is that not a clear mandate?”.

The government, realizing that they had to negotiate with the Montreal leadership, went straight to them and threatened the workers with intervention by sending in the army. The Montreal leaders responded: “Let me explain something to you. A good number of postal workers are veterans who have served our country in one of the two world wars. I'll make sure that they will wear their medals on picket lines that the army will be asked to cross. I'll also make sure that the media are there to see it all.” The army was never sent in. The government then fabricated a forged letter stating that the Montreal workers went back to work and sent it to the Toronto and Vancouver locals. This underhanded trickery disheartened workers in those locals resulting in them going back to work early.

The negotiations were underway during this incident and despite the

underhanded tactic by the government, Montreal workers settled (on behalf of all postal workers) on a \$510 (for mail handlers) - \$550 (for everyone else) annual salary increase, \$200 more than what the government was willing to offer. Two much larger accomplishments were made from this strike than just the salary increase though. Postal workers independently took the initiative and fought for themselves thereby forming the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and Letter Carrier Union of Canada (LCUC) in 1965. This strike also won postal workers and indirectly all federal sector workers the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike.

“ Not a wheel turns, not a light shines, not a piece of mail gets sorted or delivered without the kind permission of the working class. ”

The core of the union is the worker on the workforce, in a twist of irony our power as workers is to stop doing what many of us dislike to some extent or another - working. Not a wheel turns, not a light shines, not a piece of mail gets sorted or delivered without the kind permission of the working class. That is but one of many lessons from the Great Strike of 1965.

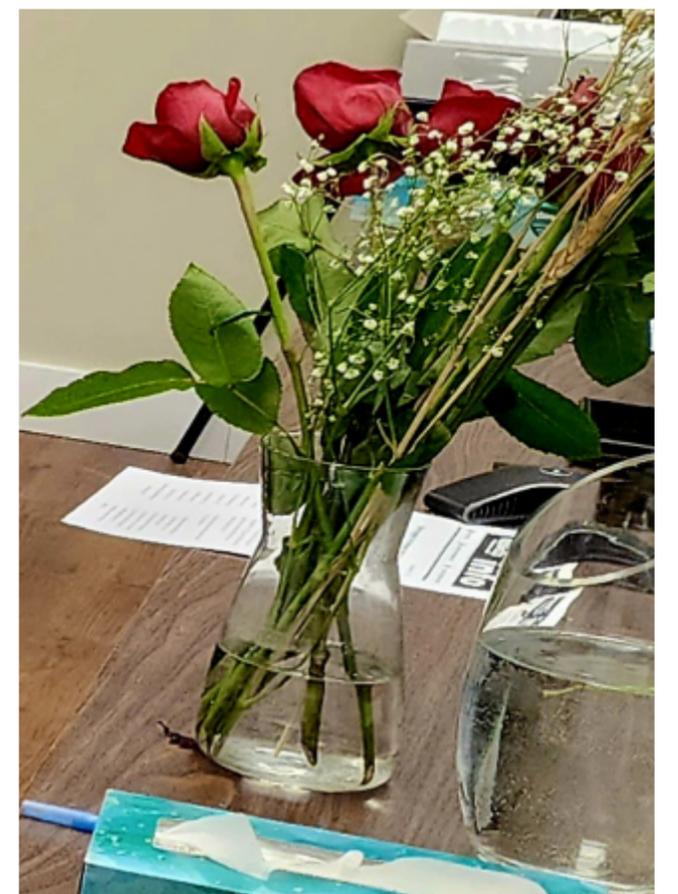


At our December GMM, the Edmonton Local's Women's Committee held a ceremony and a moment of silence to commemorate the 24th anniversary of the École Polytechnique Massacre, which occurred on December 6th, 1989. Fourteen seats were reserved with roses to honour the memory of the women who were killed in this attack simply for being women.

The victims of the 1989 massacre were Geneviève Bergeron, 21; Hélène Colgan, 23; Nathalie Croteau, 23; Barbara Daigneault, 22; Anne-Marie Edward, 21; Maud Haviernick, 29; Barbara Klucznik, 31; Maryse Laganière, 25; Maryse Leclair, 23; Anne-Marie Lemay, 22; Sonia Pelletier, 23; Michèle Richard, 21; Anne St-Arneault, 23; and Annie Turcotte, 21.

In Canada, December 6th has since become the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. This is a day to mourn and commit to fighting the hatred and misogyny that led to this event, while recognizing that women, girls, and LGBTQ2SIA+ people around the world continue to face violence and discrimination.

For more information on what the Government of Canada is doing to promote gender equality in Canada, as well as information about commemorations and celebrations, you can visit the Women and Gender Equality Canada website: <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/>



WHY WE STRIKE?

As you make your way into work,
Those benefits, wages, and protections we have
Were never simply given to us by the employer
They did not hand us a silver platter full of the gains we have
made.

Yes, we get paid every two weeks,
Unless they happen to mess that up.
Do you believe in creating a better future

For us all?

Do you want the bullying and harassment
To Stop?

Maybe you have never experienced
Any of these inaccuracies.

But, I know for a fact some have suffered.
If this was your family member

Would you think twice about trying to protect them?

Why are those suffering from illness?

Either physical or mental health issues denied claims.
We see areas where workers work alone

In the dark.
Often scared and alone,

Not knowing who's lurking around the corner.

Will you stand up for us all?

Or will you pass judgment on others for

Who they are?

An open challenge to all C.U.P.W. workers
From coast to coast to coast.
The strike lines will show who cared,
Who stood up for us all.
Even if you cannot walk the line
We can find some way for you to help

An open challenge to
STAND UNITED
When the time comes.
Your first challenge:

Go to: <https://www.cupw730.ca/home/article/279>

UNDER: Update Your Contact Information
And get your information updated.

In Solidarity, Rashpal Sehmbay



Important Dates

December 6th - National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

December 31st - Expiry of RSMC Collective Agreement

January - Tamil Heritage Month

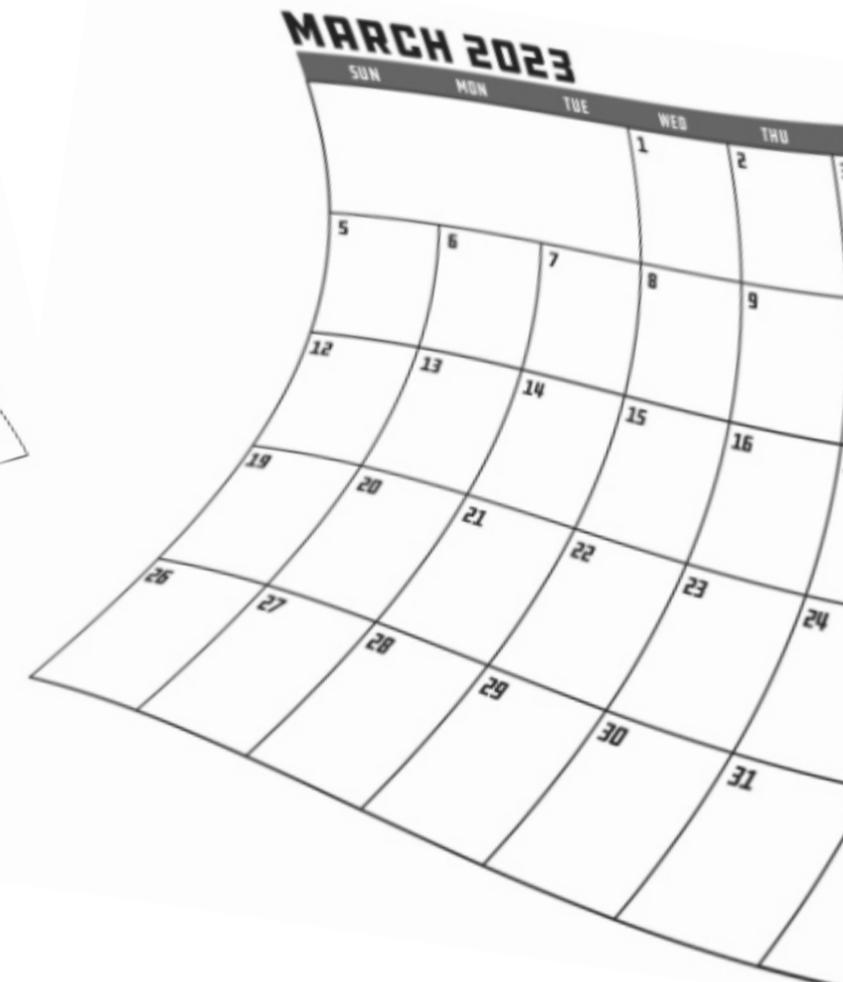
January 13th - Lohri

January 31st - Expiry of Urban Operations Collective Agreement

February - Black History Month

February 10th - Chinese New Year

February 19th - Family Day (not a holiday for us)



WORD SEARCH

words are hidden horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forward and backward

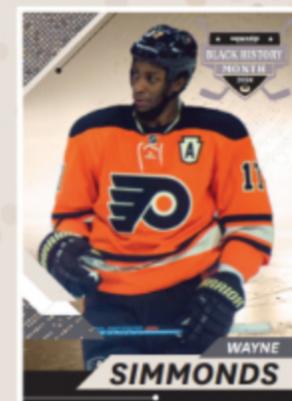
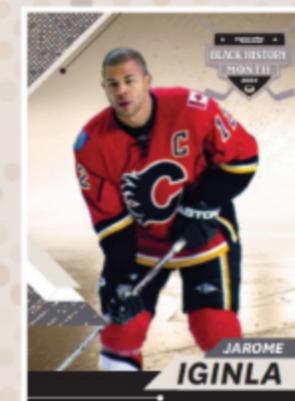
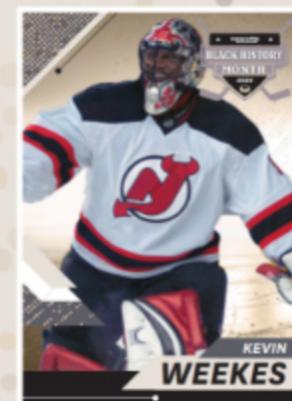
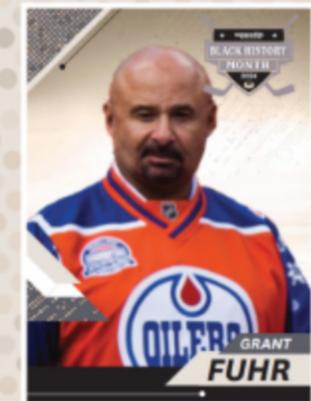
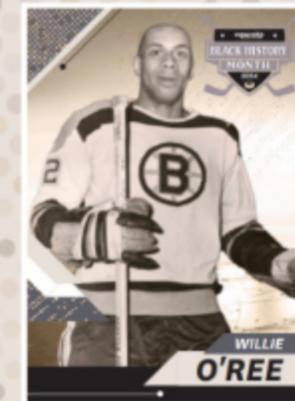
S A W E I S R L G O T A Y T W C
 E V R I P G T A I W K N L E Z N
 T C H R N R S R E A T O T R E E
 A E O D Y U O I A H F A T S P W
 G T R R O N V H G T S S V O D A
 F C H I R R O I T K H B I Y K H
 X O I A I N R Z I R L M C N E S
 A J R A B W P W B E E O O D N M
 S O F E N A I E G A R Y M R J I
 T N W I S N S D B O R O A U E R
 A O A T X T I C N M N R A M A G
 V W F Y H R B A A T O B H H D N
 E A K I B O T U O R T C S E T O
 L Y L H E I R N R X P O A L A S
 Y N T V O L T S A G I W Z L R D
 A E J N E P D R B M L A K E A E
 L R E T S N I M D Y O L L R S V

THORSBY	WETASKIWIN	OKOTOKS
ATHABASCA	BARRHEAD	EDMONTON
STAVELY	ONOWAY	PROVOST
STRATHMORE	GRIMSHAW	DRUMHELLER
CORONATION	LETHBRIDGE	AIRDRIE
EDSON	INNISFAIL	MAYERTHORPE
WAINWRIGHT	TOFIELD	FORESTBURG
FAIRVIEW	LLOYDMINSTER	LACOMBE



BLACK CANADIAN HOCKEY PLAYERS

A history of overcoming adversity, breaking down racial barriers and growing the game.



Black Women continue to fight for inclusion and create space in the game, both on and off the ice, while challenging the intersectional issues of race and gender.



Scan the QR Code to visit the CUPW web site and learn more about Black History Month

SOLIDARITY STYLE

OFFICIAL CUPW 730 T-SHIRTS AND MERCH



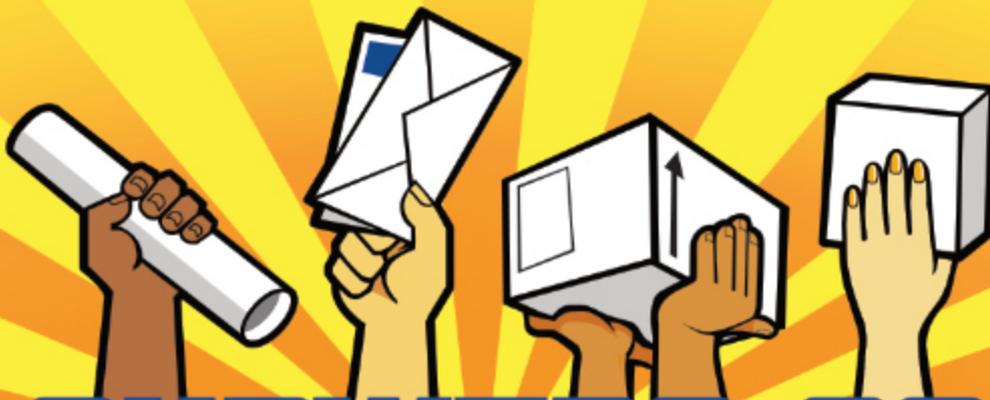
TOTE BAG \$10
MUG \$10
PATCH \$5

T-SHIRTS \$30
"COMRADE" PRICE \$40

ALSO AVAILABLE IN WHITE AND
MONOCHROME BLACK EDITIONS



CONTACT THE LOCAL OFFICE FOR PAYMENT AND DELIVERY OPTIONS
FOR ALL MERCH



CUPW730.CA

YOUR MOST UP-TO-DATE INFO SOURCE



@CUPW730



CUPW730



CUPW LOCAL 730 -
EDMONTON &
AFFILIATES



COMMUNICATIONS730
@GMAIL.COM