



InsideOut

August 2019
cupwedm.net



InsideOut

Empower // Organize // Resist

InsideOut is the monthly publication of the Edmonton Local of CUPW. The main purpose of this paper is to educate and inform members of the activities of and opportunities in their union, as well as raise awareness of anything else pertaining to the labour movement. Opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily the official views of the Local.

The InsideOut Committee is always interested in submissions of original articles, photographs, or illustrations to be considered for publication in our next issue. Prospective material should always concern CUPW or the labour movement.

Submissions should be e-mailed to the Editor no later than the 15th of each month.

Kyle Turner, Editor
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President's Report

Solidarity as Deed

Dear members of the Edmonton Local,

I didn't campaign and I had no intention of running, but on Saturday, June 1st, I was elected as President of the Edmonton Local of CUPW. I was reluctant to accept the nomination because I wasn't convinced I could use the position as an effective vehicle to help us create the change that needs to happen in our union. Some will be shocked by this statement because in our individualist culture – saturated with hero narratives – the temptation is to believe that one person with an impressive title can somehow save the day.

The truth is the President's position on its own is as powerless as any other isolated, unorganized worker. The functions of this office are aggressively weighted towards using ineffectual procedural tools to advocate on a member's behalf as opposed to empowering members to resolve their own problems: providing fish instead of teaching how to fish. This is the model I want to disrupt. The only way that workers and the labour movement will be able to save ourselves from drowning is by wholly embracing our collective power.

and their perspectives on what creates change need to be systematically overhauled.

For insight into the kind of work I aim to do, look no further than my prior role as Organizing Officer. During that time, our Organizing Committee (OC) tripled its volunteer base as well as solidified both an activist education program and a city-wide coordination network. Most importantly, our volunteers recently supported carriers in EDDD and Rosedale who called out Canada Post's (CPC) hypocritical "Make it Safe, Make it Home" campaign.

My intention as President will be to continue to prioritize and encourage the work of our OC activists and any other postal workers looking to collectively assert themselves. We will continue to train worker teams to visit all facilities and shifts in order to promote campaigns and work floor activist workshops, which will be used to further grow our organizing network. The bigger it gets, the more power the work floors will have in remedying the problems left festering by the proceduralism of grievances, consultations, arbitrations, and negotiations.

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My Intentions for the Office

In my election speech, I made it clear that I only wanted votes that supported a plan to make internal organizing and work floor direct action our guiding principles. Further, I only committed to stay on as President as long as the members were willing to volunteer their time and energy to support this strategy.

The prestige and title don't interest me – what interests me is the prospect of advancing the struggle to empower workers. Despite my stated conditions, roughly 75% of the members who voted backed my position, and I intend to aggressively assert it as long as I have the support of the local. At best, we'll turn the tide; at worst, we'll have conducted an experiment to give us a deeper understanding into just how our labour organizations

Fifteen years ago, I joined CPC specifically so that I could be a member of CUPW. I set this as my goal because CUPW was one of the most inspiring modern examples in Canada of working people taking on a predatory company and hostile governments in order to improve their own lives as well as those who came after. Sadly, since joining I have not witnessed many examples echoing our militant legacy. Once upon a time, our union was willing to fight unacceptable work conditions, unjust laws, and unconstitutional legislation with job actions and picket lines. Along the way, we traded our reliance on organized work floors for individual procedural specialists. In doing so, we surrendered the only true strength we have: our collective willingness to control our own labour.

It's no coincidence that we've been losing ever since. Simply put, if we maintain this course, we are lost.

The radical change we need is already gaining momentum in the carrier and RSMC ranks of Edmonton and, with persistent outreach and education, our entire local will be mobilized. My hope is that by sticking to our program, our local will go from being an abandoned island to a shining lighthouse: an example for all postal workers nationwide of what is possible when solidarity goes beyond platitudes and is relentlessly wielded as a deed.

One day, somewhere in Canada, workers will realize that the collective power they hold is greater than the combined might of the rich and the government. I want those workers to be postal workers, and I want nothing more than to be standing with them as they reclaim their progressive legacy.

The First Three Weeks

I suspected that finding my way around the bureaucratic aspects of the position (ie, meetings with management, office administration, etc.) would be a drag, but the transition went smoothly thanks to the guidance of the other full-time officers and our previous President, Sister Nancy Dodsworth. Nancy was also instrumental in helping me figure out which procedural tasks (e.g., grievance hearings, consultations, etc.) could be delegated to our developing layer of secondary leadership so that I would be able to put more of my time into visiting and organizing the work floors of our local.

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After adjusting to the office in the first week, the second and third weeks marked a shift in focus to getting out to the work floors to propose my organizing strategy for the local and promote a series of activist workshops. Between June 10-21, I visited Nisku, all of the Edmonton depots (except Sherwood Park), and the fleet garage, as well as every EMPP shift – totalling twenty different shifts and representing approximately 1500 members. During that time, I'm proud to say I personally secured more than 160 applications for the educationals we'll be running in early July. Due to such an incredible response, our Education Committee will be looking to add more courses to accommodate the application volume.

In my fifteen years at the post office, I've never witnessed such an appetite for union activist involvement. I believe a big part of this was a willingness to tell the members the truth about how the procedural methods relied on by CUPW have not improved our jobs in over thirty-five years and how a return to work floor organizing is the only real hope we have to potentially create meaningful change.

A perfect example of this change is the current letter carrier campaign denouncing a fraudulent restructure that's trying to cut full-time positions at Depot 2 (page 14 for details). By the time you're reading this a team of our trained organizing volunteers will have been discussing how to escalate based on CPC's response to the carriers' demands. Maybe this will be the issue that lights the fire we haven't seen in Edmonton since the city-wide mass forced overtime refusals of 2011, or maybe this will just be our local patiently reinforcing another brick in our foundation.

Either way, we know what hasn't been working for our union and we have nothing to lose by trying out a different strategy. I look forward to sharing more of these ideas with you when I visit your stations and I hope everyone trying to organize the work floors of this local can count on your support in the inevitable battles to come.

By Roland Schmidt, President



Above: Foodora campaign is announced at National Convention.

From the Editor

National Convention and Work Floor Organizing

This past May, I had the pleasure of attending our union's National Convention in Toronto. I'm sure a weeklong Convention can be viewed as a break or vacation, but I promise it is not.

On the worst days, the action started at 7 am and lasted until almost midnight. There was very little time to see any of the city, and it was usually raining when there was time to leave the convention hall. Luckily, the long hours were quite draining and I spent my free time looking for food and trying to catch up on sleep.

If you will humour me for a moment, I would like to share four of my experiences and thoughts from National Convention.

First, when I saw that I would have to attend a men's equity caucus, I was terribly disappointed. I had a bad experience at the Regional Conference and I walked out on that one. (You can request my Pre-Convention Regional Conference Report if you'd like to know more.) It was brought to my attention that this Convention was having the first ever non-binary caucus and that everyone was invited to attend. I don't identify as non-binary, but I was happy to attend as an ally and avoid the potential nightmare of the men's equity caucus. (Though I hear the men's session went quite well.)

Non-binary refers to people who do not identify with the masculine-feminine gender binary. Non-binary members of CUPW did present a resolution that did pass: where possible, gender-neutral language will now be used in our Constitution. (There are some issues with the French language, but people are working on it.)

I would also like to give a shout out to Stephanie and Devan for planning this caucus and bringing in such excellent speakers. The room was packed and everyone was giving their full attention.

Second, during the debate and voting part of Convention, I witnessed the Rules of Order to be used to stifle debate and prevent voting. I've heard this could be done, but I

don't think I witnessed it in person. In one instance, a resolution was asking to publish how members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) voted on a given motion. As far as I understand it, this motion could let members know which members of the NEC were in favour of defying back-to-work legislation, for example; and if defiance was what we wanted, presumably it would lead to those who voted against defiance not returning to their positions.

This motion was point-of-ordered and point-of-informationed into the ground. When the clock finally reached 6 pm, one of the more vocal critics of the motion (who was also a member of the NEC) pointed out that time was up and things were adjourned for the day. End of discussion. No vote. No opportunity to extend the meeting. It was just over and the rules for how a meeting should function were used in to prevent the motion from going anywhere. It was unfortunate but also strangely impressive.

Third, it was also revealed that Foodora – a bike courier-based food delivery service – had unionized with CUPW. We had a march and a rally to show support for them. This was quite impressive as there were around 600 people who took to the street.



Rashpal Sehmbly at the Foodora solidarity march.



Hundreds gathering at Nathan Phillips Square for a solidarity rally with Foodora.

As we marched, a friend suggested we get a photo in front of the Toronto Stock Exchange. There was an unfortunate news ticker-stock information combination that appealed to us. As soon as we got near it a security guard appeared to tell us it was private property. It was in the middle of a sidewalk, but we didn't argue.

Getting back to the Foodora support rally, this action showed an interesting contrast. Clearly, we understand the benefits and will support efforts to organize workers. But when it comes to our own internal organizing, it seems like we have given up on that. It's as though we unionized and now we're good, like it's not an ongoing activity. The number of elections for positions dealing with the procedural side of things in comparison to positions about organizing illustrates this clearly.

Honestly, my feelings were elsewhere. In Edmonton, we just began to engage in some work floor actions. When we refused to deliver an Epcor flyer to all points of call, we were told by management that someone higher up the chain of command was going to come to the depot and talk to us about it.

My presence wasn't going to make a difference. No one needed to be coached. But I didn't want to miss it. People had very real grievances and concerns to share and they were worthy of an answer that went beyond "work now, grieve later." This isn't an answer. I would also suggest it is a violation of the "Make it Safe, Make it Home" motto that the Corporation has been pasting all over our workplaces. (I suppose "Just Do It" would have created some copyright issues. Oh well.)

There were a number of rumours suggesting when the boss would come, but it always some weeks down the road; and, at one point, only if he could meet with Shop Stewards first to get a sense of the questions he'd be asked so he wouldn't be caught off guard.

In the end, the visit never happened. Based on what I've been told by the President of Local, the boss said he wouldn't be coming. He did, however, acknowledge that the Epcor flyer was a mistake and that it shouldn't happen again. When asked about the discipline that was given for those who refused to deliver the flyer full-coverage, Kobitowich apparently said that the error didn't excuse our insubordination.

The only thing that matters here is that we took collective action and we supported each other. If the Director can be taken at his word and the Epcor flyer situation doesn't happen again, then we won. We can't rest on our laurels, of course, and if and when a similar situation arises, we'll have to call a parking lot meeting and discuss a course of action.

Until that time comes, it is important to remember that we have a victory to claim and celebrate. But it is also important to remember that it is collective action that brought us here. If you do this kind of thing alone, your protection is gone. Direct action supported by the collective power of our colleagues is how we will get the goods and to continue to change our workplaces for the better.

For the most part, this issue is going to focus on this kind of direct action that comes from the work floor. Over the last couple of months there have been actions at Rosedale, Mayfield, EDDD, and Depot 2, and I'm pleased to report that letter carriers and RSMCs have been taking part in reclaiming the work floor. There are writeups about all of these actions as well as a statement from a member who was disciplined for taking part.

This issue also contains information about RSMC route restructures; analyses of what happened with the Pride Parade in Edmonton; an interview with recent retiree Carole Parada; as well as some general health and safety information from our Health and Safety Officer and statistics from this year's Front Yards in Bloom.

(I would like to apologize for the delay in the release of this issue. I ran into a number of computer problems over the course of a month, which set the issue back drastically. Because of this, some of the writing is as current as it could have been, but it is still relevant as the issues are ongoing.)

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

Organizing Committee Report

From the Work Floor

Since electing a full new crop of members at the April GMM, the Organizing Committee (OC) has been very active and doing invaluable work. Our basic strategy is very simple in concept but difficult in execution: activate and mobilize our membership – our most powerful asset.

As obvious as this may seem, it goes against the predominant methods of not only our Local but our union. When a union de-prioritizes internal organizing to such an extent, it's not surprising that members become disengaged and start to loudly question what the union is doing for them and what their dues are paying for. The task of the OC is to win members back to the strategy of organizing from the work floor up and to get members to believe that real power comes from our willingness to act collectively.

Agitate, Educate, Organize

Leading up to negotiations, the chair of the committee, Roland Schmidt, visited every Edmonton depot to discuss how bargaining was going. During each visit, multiple members expressed how no one from “the union” had come to talk to them in recent memory. This disconnect was startling to the OC and in an effort to correct this lack of communication, Roland led a workshop in early April where twenty volunteers were trained to visit work facilities, rally everyone together for a work floor meeting, and then present important union information, projects, and volunteer opportunities.

We also performed basic exercises in how to do group confrontations against management. This kind of workshop had not been offered locally since 2011, but the material seemed well-received and 16 of the participants would remain involved to form the next layer of our wider organizing network with representatives from most stations and every EMPP shift. A dedicated chat, Facebook group, and e-mail database were immediately setup to make sure we remained coordinated.

Due to timing and most of our volunteers being letter carriers, the first campaign idea the OC generated was to fight the route restructure starting in Depot 2. Two OC members visited Depot 2 mid-April to hold work floor meetings to educate members on the fraudulent nature of CPC's restructure methods and how we have no power in the Collective Agreement to stop them from cutting jobs and forcing carriers to work longer routes.

We gave the example of Delton depot, where despite parcel and admail productivity far eclipsing lettermail

decline, 9 full-time jobs were still cut. We also shared that the OC was not going to rely on an ineffectual grievance system to cure this problem. We were going to every depot to try and build a city-wide resistance demanding justice for Depot 2 carriers. We will be building on this in the weeks to come (see page 12, “Edmonton Postal Workers Demand Restructure Justice.”).

The first test faced by our fledgling group occurred less than a month later when CPC tried to pass off a commercial offer as a full-coverage essential flyer. OC members in both EDDD and Rosedale helped facilitate work floor meetings to discuss the hypocrisy of CPC's “Make it Safe, Make it Home” rhetoric in the context of angry customers and overburdening.

In Rosedale, around 120 carriers (split between two waves) marched on their bosses to demand the flyer be made non full-coverage. Long story made short: management gave a direct order to comply, the carriers refused and out of the 40+ who failed to meet delivery requirements (of the 60 who received the flyer), six of them were given one-day suspensions. The following day, these carriers were cheered at a floor meeting. The carriers at EDDD who refused were not even audited.

All said, this act of solidarity was a tremendous success given the severity of the refusals and the haste by which it was pulled together. More importantly, the OC has been able to promote this as an inspiring example of collective direct action to encourage more involvement (see page 10, “Edmonton Carriers Fight Back.”).

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Secondary Leadership

Further building on our foundation, Roland trained two teams of two volunteers each to help facilitate “Taking Back the Work Floor” courses where one day was dedicated to EMPP workers and the other to non-EMPP workers. We used our coordination network to promote the May 22nd and 23rd courses and approved close to 30 applicants to participate. Over the two days, we taught members how to think like organizers by listening to what their co-workers were most concerned about as a group and how to act on those concerns.

Using the city-wide 2011 forced overtime refusals and the recent EDDD/Rosedale flyer refusals as case studies, we practiced tactics of confronting management as a group, serving a list of demands, and escalating against reprisals.

Of the thirty participants, fifteen new recruits joined the committee – bringing our group to around thirty-five members in under two months.

Our next project took five volunteers from our first workshop and sent them on a tour of ten Edmonton and area depots. The volunteers were split into three squads and arrived in depots to call meetings for both waves to discuss our Depot 2 fair restructure campaign, to encourage more participation at GMMs, as well as give updates on arbitration.

This tour was a resounding success. Members were thrilled to hear about the plans we had in the works and OC volunteers were given the opportunity to refine some new leadership skills.

Our goal is to continue to train workers in all classifications, sections, and shifts to be able to replicate the organizing momentum being built among carriers. In June, we will be canvassing for more members interested in learning how to give floor talks and confront management. If enough sign up, we will run another course as quickly as possible.

Moving Forward

If the activities of the OC seem carrier-centric up to this point, it's not just a coincidence. At this stage, carriers make up the overwhelming majority of our volunteer base. Through ongoing recruitment efforts, we hope to get just as many EMPP and RSMC volunteers to start their own campaigns on whatever issues they feel are most necessary (e.g., single day annuals, restructures, etc).

Activism can only be generated by volunteers from those groups getting involved and taking the lead on their own projects. We are always happy to receive, train, and support any postal worker who is committed to an organizing strategy as the primary method to fight CPC. If you are interested in volunteering with the OC or receiving activist training in how to organize your workplace, please e-mail organize730@gmail.com.

Health and Safety Update

By Rashpal Sehmy, Health and Safety Officer

As the winter months have left us, we are no longer worried about letter carriers having to work in the dark – the brighter night sky has resolved that problem, but the winter will return and bring with it those same concerns. This is just a part of the revolving door of health and safety. Right now, however, I would like to discuss four things: the right to complain, accommodation and the decrease in positions at the Edmonton Mail Processing Plant (EMPP), injury on duty, and the 121A Ave and 149th Street intersection by the EMPP.

With increased overburdening that letter carriers are experiencing, there can be no stronger sense that the Corporation is missing the mark with its “Make it Safe, Make it Home” slogan. How safe is our employer making our jobs? Have you questioned them about this? You can, and you can utilize Article 9.07 of the urban Collective Agreement and Article 9.02 of the RSMC Collective Agreement (Right of Employees to Complain). Ensure that you have a Shop Steward present to record any pertinent information in regards to your complaint, such as what the employer will be doing to resolve the issue to make things safer for all employees.

With the recent decrease in positions in the EMPP, there have been a number of concerns raised by workers who required accommodation for medical reasons. When positions are lost, members also feel lost as they are left wondering what will happen to them and if they will be able to continue with their accommodations. This has caused disbelief that our employer is concerned for those requiring accommodation, and if you are being moved from your work location to work elsewhere, please notify your Shop Stewards. There may be cases of backfilling or other violations that may require filing a grievance.

Now, if you find yourself injured at work, please report it to a supervisor immediately. Such workplace injuries are to be reported to the Workers Compensation Board. If you are being told to fill out Short Term Disability paperwork for a workplace injury, please notify the union office for guidance.

Finally, in recent years we have seen several pedestrian accidents at the corner of 121A Avenue and 149th Street in Edmonton. This is the corner where the EMPP is situated. With a recent inquiry to the City of Edmonton, our office was notified that the corner is now due for an upgrade in the form of a pedestrian-controlled signal. The City of Edmonton anticipates construction to start in 2019.

Edmonton Carriers Fight Back

CPC's Health and Safety Hypocrisy

On May 1st, Edmonton letter carriers at the Downtown (EDDD) and Rosedale depots confronted their management over being forced to deliver a non-essential commercial flyer to all points of call regardless of the homeowner's wishes. This issue, while small on its own, was the straw that broke the camel's back, as we felt CPC had reached too far and was asking too much of an already strained workforce.

Going into negotiations, carriers deeply supported the demand that could prevent CPC from overburdening routes but, upon being legislated back-to-work by the government, the issue was left unresolved and we were forced to return to a broken system primarily responsible for why 25% of us will be injured on the job every year.

Embittered by the legislation, the pressure continued to build as the Alberta provincial election was announced. Election flyers are always challenging for carriers; they often add one or two extras kilometers to our day, since the delivery must also be made to 'no admail' customers. With one week left before the election vote, we were then saddled with hundreds of Canadian Tire catalogues.

To give context, a route with 500 residential admail recipients would be receiving 308 lbs of extra product to be delivered within a four-day span. Our reasonable requests to extend delivery to 6 days were flat-out rejected despite our appeals to health & safety.

Just as the catalogue nightmare ended, the phone books dropped - one yellow brick for every home, piling up like barricades around our mail cases. CPC completely bypassed paying us an admail premium by making the phone books addressed to "current occupant". Each book weighed 1.27 lbs, and came in stacks of 11, meaning that, again, a route with 500 houses would be receiving 640 lbs more to handle, in addition to our usual overburdened load. Initially, we were given nine days to complete the books, but once carriers at EDDD confronted management, this window was extended to three weeks.

You could sense the mood taking a very dark turn as we chipped away at the phone books. Completely lacking any self-awareness, management held promotions for their "Make It Safe, Make It Home" campaign which emphasized what we should do to keep from injuring ourselves. Rebuttals by carriers that the overburdening of the routes with things like excessive admail and phone books did more to cause injuries than loose gravel or dog attacks were dismissed by management "as out of their hands" or met with "this is the job you signed up for."

It felt like victim blaming, and it was another example of our legitimate concerns being ignored.

The breaking point came when Epcor (a private company with majority share owned by the City of Edmonton) contracted a credit offer flyer to be delivered to all houses regardless of admail preference. Carriers at EDDD and Rosedale held spontaneous parking lot meetings to discuss the problem. Both waves at Rosedale voted to confront management as a group. When we asked why they couldn't change the flyer to partial coverage, management responded "our higher-ups are telling you to comply".

Unsatisfied, we agreed then and there, to refuse full-coverage delivery of the Epcor flyer citing health & safety concerns of overburdening, confrontations with customers, as well as insisting on a standard of honoring the customer's wishes to not receive admail. Management gave Rosedale a direct order to comply. We maintained our refusal, rightly pointing out that if we didn't draw a line now what would stop CPC from continuing to overburden us with more full-coverage commercial admail like they had with a fast-food flyer in the past? The routes of many Rosedale carriers were audited that same day.

On May 2nd, disciplinary notices targeting 6 Rosedale carriers were handed out demanding that, in addition to being expected to attend their hearing, they were to correct their admail delivery failure. The workfloor met and voted to hold the line and not deliver (though carriers with previous admail infractions were advised to comply).

During the hearings, carriers stated that they had no problem with doing their job as long as CPC expanded their "Make It Safe, Make It Home" mantra to address the chronic overburdening of carriers.

One sister at Rosedale, who had a previous admail infraction but voted to stand in solidarity with the rest of us anyway, was given an emergency suspension during her hearing, despite complying with the disciplinary demand to correct the admail misdelivery. She had her access card and satchel confiscated, and was asked to immediately leave the building. If it turns out she is fired, CPC will have foolishly escalated a situation where carriers only wanted to be heard into a grudge match demanding retaliation.

On Monday morning (May 6), the carriers who already had hearings will receive CPC's "investigation summary". Rosedale voted to wait to see the investigation results before choosing how to escalate, but how far we decide to fight back will be greatly bolstered by how our

brothers and sisters throughout Edmonton realize that our struggle against overburdening and CPC's health & safety hypocrisy is on behalf of all postal workers. This was never about just one flyer; it's about a whole rotten system that tries to squeeze more work out of fewer people despite rocketing parcel growth and an already existing injury crisis.

The Edmonton depots of Rosedale and EDDD are calling on all CUPW activists, in our local and beyond, to share our story and support us where they can. We are committed to this fight, but we will be so much stronger with your support! Less organized facilities can call parking lot meetings or group coffee breaks to read this statement, and the more organized facilities can use this as an opportunity to confront their own management as a group, demanding justice for our depots while highlighting the health and safety hypocrisies existing in their own workplace. In either case, group pictures and messages of solidarity would be most appreciated and can be sent to [organize730@gmail.com] to be shared with the carriers of both locations.

05.06.2019 - Rosedale Workfloor Update

Between 30-40 Rosedale carriers participated in a delivery refusal but only six have received disciplinary hearings so far. Today, of the six, four have received a one-day suspension for refusing a direct order to deliver, failing to deliver, then refusing to correct the delivery error, then failing to deliver again.

Tomorrow Rosedale will likely hold another workfloor meeting to discuss and vote on how to proceed. A big thanks for all the support and messages of solidarity so far! They've been a big boost! More updates to follow.

05.07.2019 - Rosedale Discusses Escalation

Rosedale workers had a parking lot meeting this morning to decide what their next move would be.

The 'Sinister Six' disciplined out of the 30-40 workers who participated in the refusal were made known to the group and given a heartfelt ovation. Notably, the sister given the emergency suspension and threatened with dismissal had her emergency counted as her one-day suspension - the manager reinstating her even apologized in case she had at all felt threatened throughout!

We then discussed how, considering the forcefulness of the action, only receiving one-day suspensions was a sign that the company is reluctant to provoke us and how we meaningfully shifted the balance of power. Morale was high and we joked about how to best use the excess fliers. We felt the confrontation was worth the suspension but agreed we still wanted to talk to the city manager responsible for passing down the direct order to comply

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and enforce the suspensions. A carrier would pass along this demand to management and be told he intended to come within a week. Edmonton Downtown also made this request in solidarity and received a similar answer.

In the meantime, we spoke of wanting our example to be promoted and encouraged in all facilities in Edmonton so that we can take on bigger fights (e.g. fraudulent depot restructures) and improve our working conditions beyond the limitations of the collective agreement (CA). A perspective was offered how a carrier city-wide forceback refusal campaign in 2011 terrified CPC into improving staffing despite CPC having the right in the CA to force us to work overtime. That campaign provided an invaluable lesson: when you have the numbers and the willingness to hold the line it doesn't matter what the CA or management says about how "realistic" your demands are. Direction action gets satisfaction.

It's no small thing when workers, many of whom have never challenged a serious authority figure before, decide to take a stand like we did in Edmonton. News of our actions has been spreading quickly throughout the city and many are considering what kind of change is possible in their own workplace by building floor solidarity and embracing direct action.

Fortunately, we have a solid core of activists in Edmonton primed to carry on the struggle by recruiting, educating and organizing wherever workers haven't found their own voices yet. Postal workers are hungry for change; we have a plan to help them make it, and we have great ambitions for the next few months. We are counting on your ongoing support and for members inspired by our actions to start building or supporting movements in their own locals.

EDDD and Rosedale Activists

Calling Out Hypocrisy

A Message Delivered to Management

[The following is a message delivered to management by a letter carrier from Rosedale whose 'misdelivery' of a flyer was being investigated after the depot decided to disobey an order to deliver that flyer to all points of call. It has been reprinted in full with her permission. - Editor]

It has already been explained in detail why we decided not to deliver it. But if you want me to repeat those reasons, I will.

First of all, according to your own rules, the only flyers we are supposed to deliver to points of call that do not want flyers are political, electoral, governmental and city of Edmonton flyers. Private companies like Epcor are not part of the agreement; if it is, I've never been informed of this in my five years as a letter carrier.

This flyer is an ad. There is no mandatory important information on it that is absolutely necessary to communicate to every customer.

Second of all, delivering a flyer that is not even supposed to go to every point of call is adding to my regular workload that is already overburdened, which is not consistent with your supposed concern for our health and safety. Also, forcing a flyer delivery against a customer's will is, in my opinion, very disrespectful and arrogant. Yes, CPC is paid a good amount of money to make sure that those flyers are going to be delivered and, yes, I'm paid to deliver those flyers but that doesn't mean I must deliver them just because I've been told to do so.

That doesn't mean I cannot think and realize that what you're asking me to do is nonsense and contradicts all the values about health and safety that you keep repeating to us constantly; that doesn't mean I cannot speak up and express my point of view without being threatened or intimidated or reprimanded for my actions.

That doesn't mean I cannot have judgment or think critically about the tasks that I've been told to do. I'm the kind of person who thinks before acting, I'm not stupid, I have a brain and I use it, and I think this is bullshit. And I'm sure deep down you know it too but you won't admit it because you don't want to lose your job and it's understandable.

That said, I'd like for CPC to understand my side of the story as well because I feel this is a one way discussion and there is no place for collaboration or compromise. I feel like I have to obey and follow the orders without questioning it. Well, guess what? I am not a sheep!

If I judge that a situation is not right, I have the right to respond to it and that doesn't make me the one who's wrong in that situation.

I know that I'm a very good employee for CPC, I'm excellent at doing my job. To quote one of my customers I am "absolutely wonderful" at my job. Look at my employee file: I've never been disciplined, I've never been in trouble for misdelivering flyers; on the contrary, I always deliver the flyers properly, I always deliver the political and governmental flyers to every point of call, but I won't deliver this one for the reasons I've already given.

I won't fix what you messed up!

It's your responsibility to correct this or update the rules.

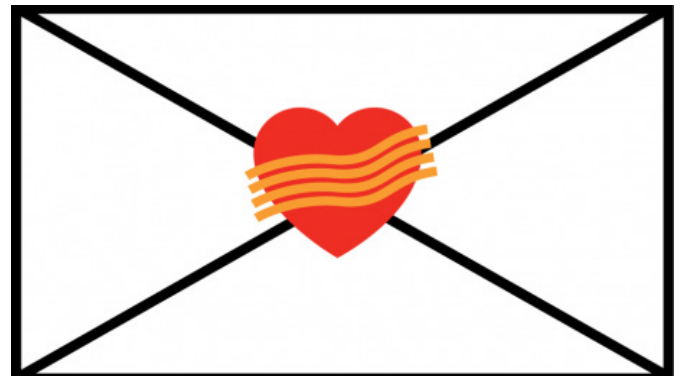
It's not just about this flyer; it's about you pushing way too far and asking way too much without caring about our health and safety.

I'm just asking to be treated fairly and with respect, not like someone who's causing trouble or being problematic.

In 5 years, I've tolerated harassment, bullying, intimidation and inappropriate comments from supervisors. All this time I swallowed it without saying a word because I didn't feel trusted, I didn't feel safe; but today I'm saying enough is enough.

I deserve better than this.

By Pamela Prevost, Rosedale letter carrier



RSMCs Taking Back the Work Floor

Report on Actions at Rosedale and Mayfield

Last year, just prior to the strike, CPC got rid of outside contractors in the City of Edmonton and hired more RSMC PREs (Permanent Relief Employees). With the history of RSMCs, it's no surprise that the Corporation feels they can do whatever they want with relief employees. They have been asked to come in at 7 am even when the employee is only doing delivery, which means they are not being paid for those hours before delivery begins.

Management also doesn't honour seniority when assigning routes for the day. If someone shows up at 6:58 am and they have lower seniority than the person who shows up at 7:05 am – who was maybe stuck in traffic or had to wait for daycare – the person who shows up at 7:05 am will be bypassed. There is nothing about daily assignments in the RSMC Collective Agreement.

To add insult to injury, at the lowest seniority relief RSMCs only receive 85% of the value of whatever route they're covering. Management had also not been forthcoming with what the routes were valued at, making it hard for employees to know exactly what to expect on their paycheque. In addition to financial hardship, this added extra stress and anxiety and caused people to struggle more during their workdays.

Because of the pay equity ruling, PREs are now to be paid \$90/day if they get sent home after 3 hours. If they are assigned to a route that pays less than \$90, it's no longer worth it to actually do a route. However, if they refuse to do the route, they may not get \$90. It is a messed up system with a lot of grey area for the Corporation to do what it pleases, but RSMCs at two depots in Edmonton have confronted management about this issue.

At Rosedale, management has been consistently messing up the pay for all ten PREs for the last 8-9 months and it's not always fixed in a timely manner. Not only that, but people don't always know that their pay is missing or wrong because they do not know how to read their paystub. Going to management one at a time meant these issues were getting resolved slowly, but in early July all ten PREs had enough.

On June 5th, I had a conversation with one of the PREs from Rosedale and we drafted up a letter that all of the PREs signed. On June 6th, the PREs then requested a meeting with management, but management shot this down because they claimed they were feeling ambushed. Roland Schmidt told management that the PREs would all be in the lunchroom waiting and management

promptly went to the lunchroom to hear the concerns that were being brought forward under Article 9.02 of our Collective Agreement – Right of Employees to Complain. Management was then provided with a copy of the letter.

Overall, June 6th was a monumental day as we assisted and watched a newer group of employees gather together and stand strong to demand answers to pressing issues that should have been addressed months ago.

On June 21st, RSMCs at Mayfield also confronted management about pay issues. That morning, Mayfield RSMCs stood together while they waited to read a letter to management that outlined their concerns and their demands. While waiting for management to join, management called an "already planned" fire drill, so we had to leave the work floor and go outside, but once we returned to the floor, management joined the RSMCs and the letter was read. Management claimed they were already aware of these issues and that they would deal with pay issues on a person-by-person basis, and then management started to walk away.

One PRE then stood in front of the whole group and loudly said: "I would just like all of the RSMCs to really go over their paystubs to ensure accuracy and report any discrepancies, whether it be \$20 or \$200. In the past month (two pay periods), I have made less than \$1200 take home. I've had to pull my child out of extracurricular activities. I've got collectors coming after me because of bills unpaid and it's really starting to affect my whole life. I really need your support in this fight, as right now I'm feeling very alone in trying to recoup what's owed to me. Thank you for your help."

Management had nothing more to say and walked away. But what we have here is a good example of workers supporting each other, speaking out, and standing together. Even though the issue came from PREs, all RSMCs were present.

Whatever the outcome of these actions, we will be bringing that information to courses and work floors to reiterate the strength that exists in standing together. We are all "the Union."

Together, we can make waves in a still pond, but divided, we sink.

By Elizabeth Tjostheim



Above: Workers at Depot 2 meet before delivering their demands to management.

Edmonton Postal Workers Demand Restructure Justice

Resisting CPC's Fraudulent Restructure at Depot 2

On June 25, both waves of Depot 2 joined together at 9:30 am to march on management and the corporate route measurement officer to read a statement (included below) denouncing Canada Post's (CPC) fraudulent route restructure system.

Included in this statement was a list of demands supported by the signatures of over 700 Edmonton postal workers collected between June 17-21. Simultaneously, as Depot 2 carriers demanded fair value for all their hard work, our National President Jan Simpson and 1st VP Julee Sanderson delivered a copy of our statement and petition to the CPC President & CEO Doug Ettinger as well as the government-appointed arbitrator.

During our confrontation with management, I explained that if the company makes a peaceful resolution impossible, workers have no choice but to assert justice from the workfloor. Our union route measurement specialists do not have the power to protect letter carriers from CPC hiding delivery values and piling more and work onto fewer, already breaking, bodies.

If our concerns are just dismissed or laughed at in the grievance or consultation process, and the collective agreement can't protect us, what alternatives do a beaten down and disgruntled workforce have? Edmonton postal workers have completely lost faith in the ability of our government to legislate fairly and of our employer to behave humanely; collective agreement or not, unionized or not, this treatment is unacceptable and we are demanding change!

In a 2018 restructure in Edmonton, Delton depot was told that their parcel values were 30% lower than their 2012 values; nevermind parcel volumes actually increasing nationally by over 160%! For Delton, that's an alleged approximate parcel decline of 200% over a 6 year period despite record parcel growth and record profits, year over year over year!

As a result, Delton lost 9 full time routes. We learned the hard way that the system cannot be trusted and we will not let the same thing happen to Depot 2.

Edmonton postal workers will be watching closely as the new routes are being built over the next month. If it becomes clear that the company is unwilling to do the right thing for the workers of Depot 2, we will be calling a city-wide meeting to discuss what we are collectively willing to do to protect ourselves from chronic overburdening.

Worker Statement

On June 6, 2019 our new local president and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) route measurement team met with Canada Post (CPC) restructure officers to discuss the Depot 2 volume count. During the count, carriers experienced an exaggerated decline in volumes for all product with many reporting that they had only 30 items of sortable mail - something they've never experienced outside of a volume count.

At the meeting, CPC claimed that mail volume was down by over 50% since 2012 and that parcels increased by only 18% over that same period. As a result, CPC said they would likely be cutting 4 routes.

Skeptical, the union asked that CPC provide the numbers behind the drastic letter mail decline and lack of increase in parcels. CPC responded that the numbers "came from a national index" which they did not have access to nor were they required to provide us with.

When we challenged CPC about the numbers seeming fraudulent, CPC said we could grieve it under Art. 50 (Urban Collective Agreement) knowing full well a successful grievance could never accommodate the missing parcel volumes.

According to CPC's own widely syndicated press releases, parcel volume has gone up nationally by at least 160% since 2012. During an Edmonton Mail Processing Plant consultation between CPC and CUPW on June 10, 2019, Darlene Schwabb, Edmonton Manager of PC&R, said parcel volumes increased by 13% in Edmonton over the past year. Considering the 27% average annual national increase in parcels, and the allegedly 13%

annual increase in Edmonton, how is it possible that Depot 2 parcel volume only increased by a total of 18% over a six year period? If CPC applied their own national average to this build, Depot 2 should be gaining at least 3 full-time routes.

Additionally, CPC is using the reduction of mail as an excuse to cut the average percentage of coverage of delivery of Depot 2 routes from 67% to 55% (which doesn't include the mandatory 1/3 of flyer coverage each day). This means on an average residential route, a carrier will be required to do almost an extra 2km a day!

To add insult to injury, before the volume count 54 out of the 70 Depot 2 routes were over-assessed. By not properly factoring in parcel volumes, new Depot 2 routes will be longer than the previous over-assessed routes and there will be fewer of them doing increasingly more work. Extending routes while CPC is still plagued by an injury crisis is a blatant contradiction of their own "Make It Safe, Make It Home" program.

Anyone who has performed the job of a letter carrier knows that overburdening is the prime cause of fatigue which heightens the probability of slips, trips and falls. In our mind, the fraudulent application of an already deeply flawed restructure system by CPC is the main culprit behind overburdening. The restructure system is not only broken but punitive and carriers have had enough!

Over just 4 days last week volunteers were able to collect approximately 700 signatures from concerned postal workers in Edmonton denouncing the fraudulent restructure happening at Depot 2. Included in this petition are 3 demands for justice for the workers of Depot 2 in Edmonton to be met for their restructure by July 26, 2019.

These demands are:

1. That CPC supply the Edmonton CUPW Route Measurement Committee with all of the numbers from the National Mail Volume Index generated in the 2019 Depot 2 volume count and that the Edmonton CUPW Route Measurement Committee be allowed to make a build recommendation based on those numbers.
2. That CPC will not cut any permanent full-time routes.
3. That CPC will create 3 new, permanent, full-time routes.

The letter carriers of Edmonton have spoken. Our hard work is the direct reason for the tremendous growth and increasing profitability of this company -- we demand to be rewarded for that commitment, not punished! Justice for the workers of Depot 2! Justice for every depot restructure!

An injury to one, is an injury to all!

Three Easy Ways to Show Solidarity

1. Share Our Story!

Call a quick workflow meeting or coffee break to share our statement and educate your co-workers about how CPC is specifically using the restructure system to sabotage the future of every carrier. Let them know that their cynicism and anger is justified and that workers, at least in Edmonton, are not waiting for a crooked arbitration system to kick them again while they're down.

Additionally, share this on whatever postal worker social media group you're a part of. The more our members are aware that there are those willing to take on this fight, the more likely others will find their voices as well.

2. Exercise Your Right to Complain - Urban 9.07/ RSMC 9.02

If your local is going through a restructure, or is scheduled for one, draft your own petition, complete with informed, well-reasoned demands that the members would be willing to back up with some form of escalation. A squad of volunteers can ask their local to book off a portion of their day so they can go visit other work floors to present this petition and ask for support. In Edmonton we had three teams of two visiting two depots a day over three days (9 facilities, 18 waves) collecting signatures. Once you have your petition, get together as a group to 'collectively complain' while handing off your demands. Most importantly, broadcast your activity!

3. 'Black Shirt Week' July 22-26

From Monday, July 22, leading up to our demand deadline on July 26, Edmonton will be re-engaging its phone-trees to encourage every postal worker to wear a black shirt (carriers & RSMCs only while sorting in their depots) in solidarity with the workers of Depot 2. Any other facilities and locals in the country are invited to do the same - it would be a tremendous boost for us in Edmonton to receive any messages of support or group black shirt solidarity pictures!

Any well-wishes, pictures, or updates on actions should be sent to: organize730@gmail.com.

By Roland Schmidt

RSMC Restructures

By Elizabeth Tjostheim, Chief Shop Steward RSMCs and Rosedale RSMC

The history of RSMC restructures has been driven by the Corporation. In the past, we had the route calculator online tool, but in the last year the Corporation has removed this. This means that this year we have not been able to use the calculator to verify the values they have provided on the proposed routes. Instead, we have gone through each route manually with our own strategy since we don't yet have access to information (that is, access to GeoRoute) like the Urban Collective Agreement does.

First, we go through all of the Schedule "A-1" and "A-2" documents to make sure that all of the Sites (RMB, CMB, LBA, etc.) are accounted for. Then we make sure the Schedule A's make sense. For example, we have found directions that say, "turn left on UNKNOWN," as well as missing addresses for RPOs, LBAs, and CMBs. This is not acceptable and we always request that this be fixed. Next, we go through the Schedule "A-1"s and "A-2"s to verify the kilometres they claim for each site are correct in the Daily KMs column and we document any discrepancies.

Our intentions after the review process is to go back to the depot that is being restructured with the info we have found on the proposed routes and present it to the RSMCs and then collect their questions and concerns. We were able to come up with a table that shows variable and stop information in a more broken-down format. We brought this kind of information to Delton prior to their restructure and we received positive feedback: it was nice to see what was actually being given and taken away on the proposed routes. We hope to continue doing this going forward.

Route holder input is valuable and any questions and concerns they may have we will put on the agenda to bring to the next consultation with the employer, and we will provide the answers that were given when we receive the consult notes. Unfortunately, our timelines are tight during the review process. It is a lot of work and we only have ten working days to get it all done – and only five working days if we end up missing the book-off deadlines); then we send them our agenda and request a consult with the employer.

During the bidding process, the employer is required to follow Article 11 in the RSMC Collective Agreement. This means they cannot bypass you in the bidding process when it's your turn based on seniority. If you are away during the bidding process (on holidays or other leave),

you should be contacted regarding which route you want to bid on. It is a good idea to put together a list of at least three routes you would choose if you know you will be away. If a route holder leaves the depot after the bidding process is finished, the restructured route will then be put up for bid according to Article 12 in the RSMC Collective Agreement once the restructure goes live.

If you are interested in participating in the review process or if you have any questions or concerns regarding future RSMC restructures, please contact our Route Verification Officer via email at cupwedmroutever@gmail.com or contact the office at 780-423-9000.

For more information on how the RSMC restructure process works, please check Article 11.03 (The Restructuring of Routes, p. 25), 11.04 (Information to the Union, p. 25), and 11.06 (The Bidding Process, p. 26) of the Collective Agreement for Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers.

Front Yards in Bloom 2019

By Kathleen Mpulubusi, Recording Secretary

The results are in!

Thank you CUPW members! 5300 yards were nominated all over the city, so 5300 yards and brochures will have the CUPW logo.

CUPW members nominated 1363 yards, so that's 1363 happy customers.

The Edmonton local has been involved with this program since 1999. It's a unique tradition and partnership between us, the Edmonton Horticultural Society, and the City of Edmonton.

As we saw during the strikes last year we had great support from the public. It's community outreach programs like Front Yards in Bloom that help to strengthen our relationship in the communities. There are many happy "Thank You" to CUPW members when customers get their signs.

A big thank you to the people that helped to distribute and collect nomination forms. They are George Opstad (Depot 2), Jeniffer Richmond (Mayfield), Elizabeth Tjostheim (Rosedale), Peter Hall (Whitemud South), and Jen Reimer (Delton).

Thank you to everyone who used the City website to nominate yards as well.

The top yards in all the categories will be announced at the beginning of August. The awards ceremony will be Sept 11.

Honouring a Recent Retiree

An Interview with Carole Parada



On February 23rd, 2019, I had the pleasure of sitting down with Carole Parada of Edmonton – a recent retiree from Canada Post and long-time member of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. I have known Carole for almost six years – since I began my career as a postal worker – but I got closer to her this past year

as she reached her retirement. I've learned much about patience, dedication, trust, compassion, and professional skills from Carole.

Carole grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan near the town of Cudworth (population of approximately 770 as of 2011), which is 85 kilometres north-east of Saskatoon. She feels lucky now that she had such an upbringing but realizes that she didn't appreciate it much at the time. Carole went to the University of Saskatchewan and studied Arts and Science, Sociology, and English. She moved to Edmonton in 1977 when she was eight-months pregnant.

Carole began working at the post office on September 23rd, 1980. Reminiscing about her thirty-eight-year career, Carole took me back to when it all began. She received confirmation that she was hired by phone call and it was roughly six months from when she was hired until the day she began working. For approximately four-years, Carole worked part-time at the main plant in Edmonton, which she described as an environment that bustled like a beehive. During this time, she also studied Sociology at the University of Alberta. When asked what piqued her interest in working for the postal service, she replied, "Income, hours, and being a young mom. I could work in the evenings after hubby was home. I like working together and being busy." Carole acknowledges her husband as her strongest influence to apply at the post office

At the start of her career, Carole worked in Forward Letters, which included all mail leaving Edmonton. She moved on to work full-time in Wickets Retail Outlet and moved again to Registration in the early 1990s. She worked in the old downtown plant, and all the old Stations, including D, E, F, M, and 7.

When asked what she loved most about CUPW and working for the post office, Carole responded: "Definitely interaction and all the people you work with. Seeing many different lifestyles and calls of life." When asked about her least favourite aspects, Carole said it was "at times, long

hours, standing, and backaches; punching time cards and strict break periods."

Carole said that going to work in Wickets brought much more flexibility to her work schedule. When she first started, all she wanted was to make enough money to purchase a sewing machine and that playing Pictionary on her breaks was a highlight – though after becoming too loud, Pictionary was no longer allowed to be played on breaks. She recalls ridiculous lineups leading out the door during peak periods like Christmas. Another occasion that comes to her mind is a co-worker swooning over Edmonton Oilers player Craig Simpson when he came into the post office.

There was also an anthrax scare in 2002. Employees were quarantined for several hours and some employees were recommended to have a bleach shower. Carole was not one of these employees. She remembers the media taking photos of the incident and one of these photos appearing as the cover of the Edmonton Sun. There was also a made-for-television movie that was filmed in the old Bonnie Doon Facility. Starring Farrah Fawcett, "Small Sacrifices" was released in 1989 and it follows the true story of a postal worker from Oregon named Diane Downs who was convicted of the murder and attempted murder of her children.

When it comes to strikes, Carole recalls the strike of 1981 being the longest, but she wasn't too concerned as her family had a dual income. Some members of the Letter Carriers Union of Canada received unemployment insurance that year. Negotiations seemed simpler back then, and while Carole suggests that there might be an advantage to having the LCUC and CUPW combined, there are still more broad issues.

Since her retirement, Carole has started going to the gym and enjoying time with her grandkids – especially as their parents travel – as well as time with her elderly parents who still reside in Saskatoon. She has a lunch group with former co-workers and has been enjoying catching up. When asked if there is anything she would have done differently, she says she would have tried to "go full-time faster to get to retirement and get the pension going."

When asked about tips for working in the post office, Carole offers that we should "be patient with each other because everyone's going to have a bad day. Don't take things too serious – everyone is going to make mistakes." I would like to say that I've certainly learned a lot about patience, dedication, trust, and compassion from working with Carole.

By Andie Wirsch, Depot 2 letter carrier

Photo Submissions

The following photos were taken at the end of our Taking Back the Work Floor course, which had close to 200 hundred applicants and ran six times over the month of July. Drawing on the forceback refusals of 2011, this course is designed to give workers the skills they need to engage in collective action and confront management. The course seeks to get workers to think outside of the procedural approach that relies on the Collective Agreement and filing grievances. The goal is to return to the origins of unionism and remember that collective problems require collective solutions, and it is, in the end, direct action that gets satisfaction!





HOW TO BEAT YOUR BOSS.

MARIANNE GARNEAU

will talk about how workers can develop and use their power to win concessions from bosses. Focusing on

the **"solidarity union" model of workplace organizing,**

she will draw on her experience as an organizer with the Stardust Family United campaign in Times Square, New York, which has accumulated massive gains without ever signing a collective bargaining agreement. She will also describe how solidarity unionism fits in relation to recent developments in labour law, and left politics.

Marianne Garneau is an organizer with the SFU 630-640 Industrial Union Branch of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), in New York City. She is also the current chair of the IWW's Education Department Board, and is the publisher of the blog organizing.work.

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