



INSIDEOUT
DECEMBER 2019



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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SOLIDARITY IN WORD AND DEED

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Comrades,

I've found out quickly that October/November is the 'peak season' equivalent for the Union office. We've just completed consultations for the Edmonton Mail Processing Plant, Registration, and Maintenance annual shift bids. Soon we will be consulting on the depot bar charts, every classification's vacation schedules, as well as Christmas holiday staffing.

If you've never been to a consultation before, the best way to describe it is like going into a negotiation without any leverage. Basically, whatever CPC decides to propose gets implemented, despite our objections, while the Union's proposals are all but ignored unless they did not undermine CPC's goals in any way.

A good example of this occurred during the latest EMPP annual shift bid consult. This past Summer, CPC cut around 30 positions in the Plant claiming that due to the strike, we lost customers and the business would never recover. The Union objected, rightfully pointing out that volumes would increase again as customers inevitably returned to our more affordable service and as parcels increased moving into September. CPC welcomed us to grieve it if we didn't agree with their staff cutting.

Flash forward to the October 29th consult where CPC said they needed to create a few positions precisely because it couldn't squeeze enough work out of its already reduced staff levels. Looking deeper, I feel this can be attributed to two things: 1) CPC tripping over their own feet; and 2) the work floor pushback that is finally building in the EMPP.

That said, the rest of our proposals to add more staff, with special focus on the drastically under-staffed ML and parcels sections, were outright dismissed. The same pattern presented itself at the review of the Whitemud South volume count, where CPC unilaterally pretended away roughly 30% parcel growth over the past year.



President's report at the November GMM.

Their game, their rules, and the more we pretend we can win at it, the more we lose.

Consultations are a very unfortunate function of the modern labour movement. A considerable amount of the Union's time and resources are invested into what amounts to little more than a pre-scripted spectacle written by CPC. We can kick and scream and object, but the outcome is determined before we even arrive at the table.

Instead of visiting work floors over the past two weeks to recruit and organize our members, I've been sitting in a room with sometimes over twenty people watching CPC's corporate team calculate how to drain even more blood from a stone. To be clear, they don't hate us. We're just a thing that's in their way. We are not equals at their table because we don't have power, and without power our plight will never be taken seriously.

If you want one of the most honest explanations as to why not just our Union but the whole labour movement is losing the class war – the struggle of bosses making more money at the expense of workers' wellbeing – it's because many of our best and brightest believe that we win by having the most clever arguments in consultation or arbitration hearings; all the while, our true strength, the mobilization capacity of our members, is neglected.

Emphasis on Education

As obvious as this problem is to anyone unwilling to reinforce the decline of our own Union, the essential question becomes: what is the alternative? The emphasis of our local on direct work floor empowerment and organizing is no accident. It is a deliberate attempt to re-establish our power as workers by creating a collective threat that cannot be ignored. We're creating a game where the rules favour us.

Only this will reverse the decline. Once CPC fears we can harm their objectives, then we regain leverage at consultation. Even better, once organized, workers need not wait for consultation. If there is a staffing shortage we want addressed, for example, we can collectively confront it ourselves.

To this end, we will continue to promote our Taking Back the Work Floor course and encourage every member in our local to understand that as daunting as this approach may seem, it gets easier the more those who believe in the power of people supporting one another join us. We already have more applications than the next three scheduled November courses can hold, but we will use any surplus to plan our next three courses in December.

Those who haven't already participated, please accept this as your invitation to the real unionism and your transition from the platitudes of solidarity to the actual practice of solidarity.



Members at the November GMM.

Beyond Edmonton

As reported previously, news of our efforts is quickly spreading throughout the rest of the country. As a result, I'm thrilled to report that I recently had a very encouraging conference call with members of the Toronto Executive. They wanted to hear all about how we established our organizing programme in Edmonton and they want to fully replicate it in Toronto. Once they decide on dates, we'll discuss the possibility of sending out some of our activists to get their courses properly up and running as well as share stories of the accomplishments of our local directly to their work floor.

On the topic of expansion, on October 25th, I was invited to speak at the introductory ceremony of one of our Regional schools where some of our leading activists from all over the Prairie Region travelled to Edmonton to participate in various CUPW educational courses. There, I was able to share the proposal that Brother Lambert, the Regional Education and Organizing Officer, and I just completed. This was designed to systematically build organizing capacity throughout the Region. Specifically, we've targeted four locals of different sizes – Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg – where activists have already reached out to us, eager to support the work being done in Edmonton.

Within the next month, we'll be hosting a call with them to detail, step-by-step, how to secure funding, adapt our material to their context, and, most importantly, promote their course opportunity via work floor meetings. From there, we will be sending either myself or other organizing facilitators to help get these locals self-sufficient in teaching the course.

Beyond that, the graduates of this course will elect delegates to participate in a first for our Union: a regional organizing committee. This kind of committee is vitally important because it will be how the locals spread updates of their activities as well as coordinate job actions across the Region. One of our allies will be posting the video of this speech shortly if anyone is interested in checking it out on YouTube: the channel is called Red Rose Rising.



Shop Stewards being sworn in.

Building resistance in this way, from the work floor up, is always the correct approach, especially when considering the seeming reluctance of our own National Executive Board to meaningfully confront the unpleasant realities facing postal workers and the Canadian labour movement in the form of anti-worker legislation.

As most of you will recall, the last GMM, our local sent an open letter to National asking what ways they could support our referendum, in which 83% of our members expressed a willingness to organizing back-to-work defiance. National responded that they would discuss the possibility of discussing it at their next meeting (November 5th-8th), two weeks past the requested dates.

For now, I will continue to give them the benefit of the doubt, but these delay tactics need to be publicly called out for what they are. The delegates at our National Convention were very clear that the Union needs to mobilize around an action plan. No internal organizing work has been done by National since their election over five months ago in May. We can't afford to waste any more time.

To be clear, this is National's opportunity to lose. We want to work with them, not around them, to build a strategy to fight against the considerable obstacles before us.


To our friends on the National Board, I appeal to you once again. It's not too late to show good faith to face this difficult conversation head-on and be honest

about your perspectives on what our Union can do to prepare for the inevitable return of back-to-work legislation. If you're unwilling to lead this fight, fine. But you need to be upfront and honest with members about why.

To be clear, they don't hate us. We're just a thing that's in their way. We are not equals at their table because we don't have power, and without power our plight will never be taken seriously.

Beyond that question, it is your responsibility to amplify the work floor organizing being done in Edmonton as well as the resulting momentum growing throughout the Prairie Region. This movement will eventually spread to the rest of our Union regardless of what you do, but it will happen so much sooner and we could be so much stronger with your direct support.

Help our Union reclaim its radical legacy and re-establish itself as a leading light for not only the Canadian labour movement, but for all Canadian workers wanting a better life. Show us solidarity in both word and deed.

Together, we truly are mighty. 



By Roland Schmidt, CUPW Local 730 President.

Photos by James Ball.

FROM THE EDITOR

By Kyle Turner, Editor.

While I can keep blaming my cat, and I will, the truth is it's my fault for this issue's delay for having a coffee table that is clearly broken and cannot support the weight of my cat and my computer. But just like my dear sweet cat, it seems I'm also refusing to learn.

I'm also pleased to announce that the InsideOut has a functioning committee. Kristine, Jack, Wendy (who designed the wonderful cover and did the meme-work that appears within), and Natasha (who helped edit while the computer technicians mulled over whether my computer was worth fixing) have made the experience much more enjoyable and easy-going.

I think this is one of the strongest issues. I'm especially pleased to share the write-up about the work floor action at the EMPP. Great work, everyone!

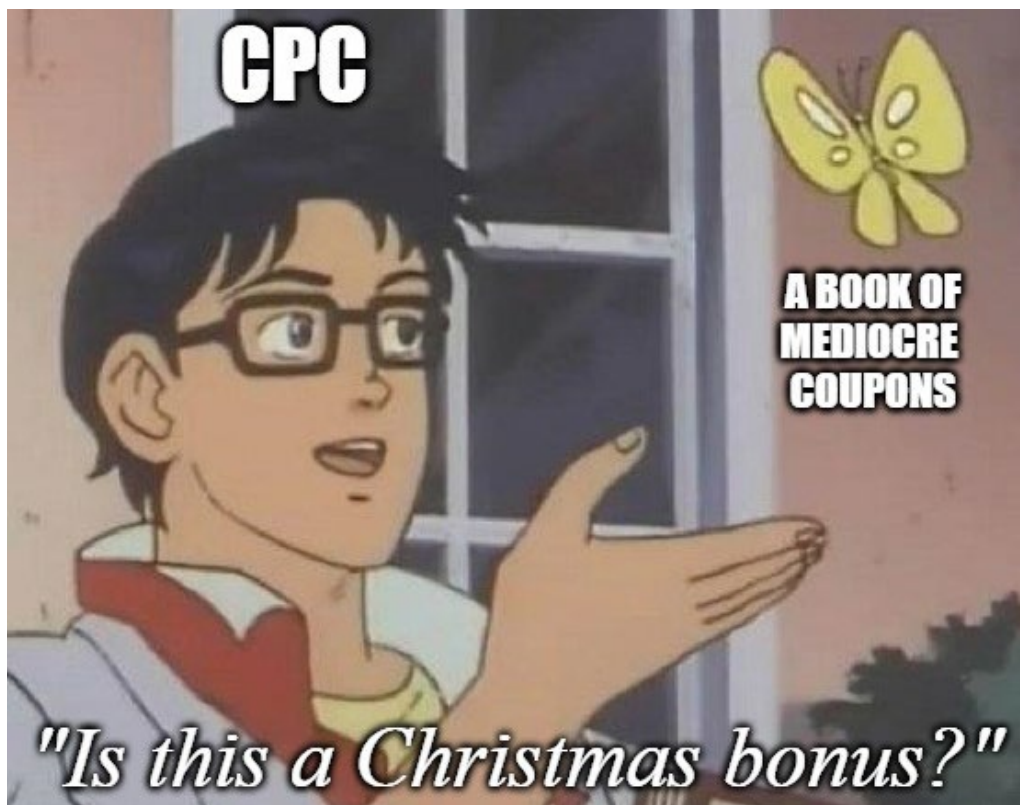
There has been some misinformation spread about the InsideOut in recent weeks. For the last issue, we decided to go with a glossy cover. After this, it was

claimed we were wasting more money by using a slightly more fancy cover. This is not true. The glossy cover made the issues cheaper. We've also decided to do our best to keep the issues to a maximum of 20-pages and this should also help keep costs down.

All right, that's it. I hope you enjoy the issue and I look forward to seeing what the Committee does in the future! 🐾



The culprit returns to the scene of the crime. (He did this to himself while trying to steal corn chips.)



CONSULTATIONS AND HYPOCRISY

CANADIAN TIRE MOA AND THE OVERALL DISREGARD FOR EMPLOYEES

In the following, I would like to address two things. First, there is the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) regarding the Canadian Tire flyer and the corporation's differential treatment of Urban members and RSMCs. Second, we have the Corporation's overall disregard for their employees.

Canadian Tire Flyer Memorandum of Agreement

I have an immense dissatisfaction with any consultation that provides separate terms for Urban and Rural carriers. Rural carriers are not less than Urban carriers in any way, yet they're continually getting shafted. Discussing the recent Canadian Tire flyer consultation highlights exactly this situation.

In a group consultation with Edmonton Local President Roland Schmidt, CUPW Route Measurement authority Warren Melnyk, two members of management, and myself, we reviewed the MOA for the flyer. On the union side of things we found a couple outstanding issues to clarify.

For both the Urban and Rural carriers we clarified that consultations with LJHSC (the core team, or as many as are available) need to be completed at least one week prior to each mailing. Since routes are dynamic - route holders change, reliefs change, etc - specific circumstances need to be addressed each mailing, meaning consultations for Health & Safety cannot be "lumped together," especially if they're happening weeks or months apart. Having more than one LJHSC member present is also key as witnesses can prevent he said/she said situations.

Any consultation needs to be scheduled with time for both sides to research impacted routes, speak to carriers, and weigh the issues prior to the discussion, with additional time to bring the discussion back to the floor and the directly-impacted employees.

Focussing on Rural routes, Warren Melnyk pointed out that a clause for OT is not negotiated into the MOA, which is problematic since these routes are severely limited by the volume and weight capacities of the RSMC's vehicle, potentially requiring multiple trips to complete the flyer.

CPC's response to this was: "employees requiring a second trip will be compensated accordingly." It's prudent to point out the hypocrisy in CPC being willing to (potentially) spend money on temps/terms/casuals to deliver portions of ONLY flyers, yet refusing to acknowledge flyer value in the restructure process (as they pertain to volume, weight, impact on percentage of coverage).

Shockingly, CPC had nothing constructive to say when it comes to addressing the ongoing issue of improper (and incomplete) restructures.

If you have an appetite to hold CPC accountable for paying any required OT accrued in meeting the demands of the Canadian Tire mailing, please contact me, Kristine Lynn Bowman, or Elizabeth Tjostheim (see page 3).

Disregard for Employees

If you look at CPC's own broadly-advertised values, employees are not mentioned at all - not even under "Safety". I'd also like to point out the bitter hilarity in the line now being included on 24 notices: "This meeting is being held in your interest as much as the Corporation's."

The following are just a few examples of CPC's disregard for its employees.

Exhibit A:

A newer, diabetic, carrier was penalized with a waived one-day suspension for delay of mail, after a very long day (involving hours of OT). Outgoing mail they had picked up had gotten mixed with mail they hadn't been able to deliver en route.

Due to exhaustion and diabetes-related complications, the carrier forgot to go through the mixed bin to separate the route mail from outgoing mail. The next morning they were confronted, and served a two-four without much in the way of an opportunity to correct the issues themselves.

The resultant suspension was deemed “fair” by CPC because they felt the employee’s story changed - from not realizing the mail had gotten mixed, to accidentally mixing the mail, to remembering the mail got mixed but forgetting to sort it out at the end of the day.

Exhibit B:

An emergency suspension (which by definition must involve an immediate threat to a person, property, or product) led to termination of a temp with under a year’s seniority for attempting to find a better model of customer service for consumer’s choice.

The temp was providing ‘no flyers’ labels with their flyers to customers, with the understanding that the customers can remove them if they would like to maintain flyer delivery. There was some confusion when the management company of another apartment building took it upon themselves to place these consumer’s choice signs on all their suite’s mailboxes.

A general lack of training was identified by the carrier, specifically in learning how misdelivery impacts the corporation’s image to both the advertiser and customer. The employee, despite their drive to receive further coaching, remorse for their actions once they attained understanding of impact, a willingness and commitment to perform better, and an extensive letter of apology, was still emergency-suspended, and subsequently terminated.

Our grievance officer requested a call regarding this file - the email was acknowledged, but the request for a call was not respected.


Exhibit C:

An employee, whose first language is not English, received a 24 hour notice with words such as “vexatious”

and “insubordination.” This person is already facing enough challenges without their employer intentionally (“vexatious”... really?) creating more issues.

Exhibit D:

A long term employee, absolutely adored by his customers (with multiple compliments on file), was accused, twice in one day, of getting overly aggressive, resulting in a three-day served suspension. In one incident the employee was in a run-down apartment and ended up trapped between groups of people while trying to successfully deliver an item. The other was a he said/she said situation.

Throughout all these situations, where is the benefit-of-the-doubt for the employee? Where is the care and consideration for the human element in this business model? 

By Kristine Bowman, Chief Shop Steward of Stations and Depots and EDDD letter carrier.



FIGHTING A BULLY BOSS

EMPP SHIFT 1 PARCELS CONFRONTS MANAGEMENT

By Parcel McBelterson

Trevor was disliked the moment he was assigned as the new supervisor to the shift 1 parcel section. Where previous supervisors would be more respectful and ask workers about perceived hiccups in operations, Trevor would jump right in, making accusations and threats in order to get his way.

Months of his needlessly aggressive and dismissive attitude sparked the first confrontation when Trevor removed a worker from their rotation of duties. This worker asked Trevor why they were breaking rotation (a right employees have to avoid repetition and strain of performing the same duties). Trevor said he will tell the worker later after they got back to work.

Time passed with Trevor coming and going from our work area on several occasions until the worker asked again why they were being rotated out against the schedule. Trevor barked that the worker would be suspended unless they did as they were told. The worker, along with a steward, then went to go and talk to the shift manager, Emery, who heard them out and made Trevor apologize.

Unfortunately, Trevor's poor behaviour didn't stop there. On Nov 18, a worker who had come in for voluntary overtime was getting tired while sweeping parcels off the belts (one of the more physically taxing jobs in the EMPP). Typically, those getting fatigued or voluntarily working overtime would ask another worker to trade with them before the trade was made 'official' by a supervisor. In this case, Trevor flat out refused, despite the willingness of the workers to help each other out, and then wouldn't explain why he refused. This circumstance really aggravated our entire section because we are doing our best to ease the burden of an increasingly heavy job as Canada Post keeps cutting our co-workers despite forever increasing parcel volumes.

On Nov 19, we were finally pushed over the edge. The parcel shift is all the way at the back of the plant, opposite the locker and lunch rooms. Our shift is not considered over until we swipe out at a station, the nearest of which is about a 3 minutes walk. Sometimes if there is still work to be done on


the belts, some of us will stay as a courtesy right up until the end of shift. On this day, parcel dispatch was delayed, so parcels were backing up on the belts and lots of work was being carried over into Shift 2.

One of the consequences of being treated poorly by a supervisor is that we are not as willing to extend the courtesy of staying in the section right up until the end of shift. With 3 minutes left to go, we walked together to the station where we line-up to swipe off shift. When he saw us leaving, Trevor stormed right in front of us and demanded we stay and finish our shifts. The workers just calmly walked around him. Trevor even extended his arms, moving side to side trying to block us. The workers just walked more widely around him.

Infuriated by the experience, upon arrival on Nov 20, 20 out of 25 of the shift 1 parcel workers marched to the opposite side of the plant to the Emery's office (shift manager) joined by the shift 1 chief shop steward and a steward from another section. There, we demanded that Emery come out and address the ongoing problems with Trevor's behaviour. Emery insisted that this was not an appropriate way to have this conversation and that we should all go back to work.

We insisted it was our right to complain and that we would wait there until we were heard. After a few minutes, Emery returned and agreed to listen as we took turns over the next 20 or so minutes calmly sharing our stories of Trevor's unnecessary behaviour of needless confrontations and general pettiness.

To Emery's credit, he acknowledged our concerns and said he would again speak to Trevor. If anything important develops, we will be sure to share. Until then, it should be acknowledged that this expression of solidarity was not something we have much experience with. It felt powerful to stand up for ourselves after being treated poorly for so long.

Although our collective complaint was a bit rough around the edges, a few of us who took the organizer training course were able to keep the confrontations mostly focused and constructive. We hope this is the first step for our section in finding its voice to push back against managerial harassment and overburdening. 

WE REMEMBER

AND THEN WE FIGHT

By Kathleen Mpulubusi

On December 6th, 1989, a lone gunman entered l'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, separated the men from the women, and opened fire. Fourteen women died because they were women. No other reason. In 1991, Parliament declared December 6th to be the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. It is also known as White Ribbon Day.

December 6th, 2019, is the 30th anniversary of this tragic day. Has anything really changed over the last thirty years?

Unfortunately, not much has changed. In 2017, 84% of homicide victims in Canada who were killed by a current or former intimate partner were women. In the first 8 months of 2018, 106 women and girls were killed in Canada, primarily by men. On April 23rd, 2018, ten people were killed in a van attack in Toronto by a perpetrator who was motivated by misogyny. It was the deadliest terror attack on Canadian soil since l'Ecole Polytechnique. Indigenous women and girls continued to be killed at a rate 6-times higher than others.

Alberta holds the dubious distinction of having one of the highest rates of domestic violence in Canada. In the last 10-years, over 103,343 women and 108,955 children were turned away across Alberta, mainly because the shelters were full. There are over 550 shelters across Canada and approximately 75% of people are being turned away because the shelters are full. In rural areas and particularly on First Nations reserves, it is even harder to access these services.

Intimate partner violence affects everyone at all levels and in all segments of society, and family violence is also a workplace issue. Both victims and perpetrators are in the workplace. Unions have been demanding domestic violence leave as part of contract negotiations – this is a current demand of CUPW in our ongoing negotiations.

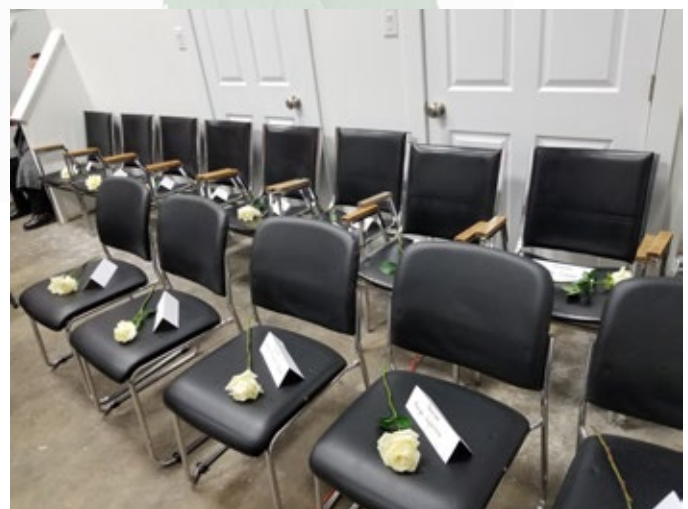
As of September 1st, under the updated Canada

Labour Code, employees are entitled to 10 days of Domestic Violence Leave per calendar year. For employees with three months of continuous employment, the first 5 days are paid. This leave is over and above Personal Days. All employees are entitled to this leave even if they are not the direct victim of the violence – for example, if you have a child who has been victimized, then you are entitled to this leave.

There have been calls for a National Action Plan to ensure that women in all areas of the country have access to comparable levels of services and protection. We must be vigilant to ensure that the current provincial government does not cut funding for these desperately needed services in the name of balancing the budget. In our own workplaces, there are Social Stewards, the Employee Assistance Program, and other supports to help survivors. We need to do our part to support our fellow workers.

At the December 1st General Members Meeting, there was a special commemoration ceremony to mark this sorrowful anniversary. On December 6th, we asked for a moment of silence to remember all the survivors and victims of gender-based violence. The rights of women are human rights. The fight for gender equality and the end to gender-based violence has been the longest fight of all, spanning millennia. The price we pay is too high for all of us.

And so the fight continues. 🚫



Fourteen empty seats reserved with name tags and roses to honour the victims of l'Ecole Polytechnique.

THE RELUCTANT ACTIVIST

NOT FOR OURSELVES BUT FOR EVERYONE

Greetings Sisters, Brothers, and Cousins. I'm Wendy, a newly-minted Shop Steward and work floor organizer at Mayfield Depot, and a committee member for the magazine you are now reading. And I absolutely didn't and don't want to be any of those things.

So why am I doing them anyway? I'll try to explain.

I've been a letter carrier for just over ten years now, and I don't think my career has been anything remarkable or unusual. I spent the first two years being shipped from depot to depot as a relief worker. I've worked through Postal Transformation, two strikes, and a couple of injuries and surgeries. I've had good days, bad weeks, horrible months.

But in general, I did well enough at the job and enjoyed it overall. I worked hard, got through the tough days, and I didn't complain. Generally, I keep my head down and "stay off the radar," and I've largely avoided drama, conflict, and major discipline. I like to think that I've been a good employee. I take pride in my work: much of the time I enjoy it, still. But I've always just worried about my own part and thought that was enough.

Over time, however, things change. Mail delivery is becoming a case study in diminishing returns. Bit by bit, the routes get longer. The workdays get longer. Pay stagnates. Bonuses are clipped (flyers) or eliminated (Christmas incentive). The rewards for good work never really come as the goal posts just keep moving.

I also began to notice that even though I have been (generally) treated fairly, not everyone has been as fortunate. Too often a new story of persecution or favouritism reaches my ears. Harsh suspensions for first offenses happen more and more frequently. Management appears to be focused less on assisting our work and more on catching us in wrongdoing. Any support, however thin, evaporates at a single customer complaint or missed flyer.

In short, the Corporation is not really on our side.

Everywhere in the workplace, where there ought to be support and cooperation, there is division. Wave 1 versus Wave 2. Carriers versus Depot Support. Collections and Delivery versus the EMPP. "The Faster" versus "The Slower." And management versus us. It is isolating and exhausting.

Perhaps worst of all, where was our Union in all of this? From my point of view, it appeared that the Union – tasked with helping, defending, and representing us – was the worst offender of all. They emulated the worst of the Corporation's behaviours as they consolidated power in a select few, embraced passivity cloaked as cooperation, and apparently listened to the workforce very little and acted unilaterally - if they acted at all.

Perhaps I wasn't seeing the whole picture, true. But what indications to the contrary were there? After a strike and being forced back to work, having lost much and gained little, I began to seethe and despise both sides equally. It felt like Management didn't care, the Union didn't care, and we had no hope of changing our lot. After a second strike and back-to-work legislation, I'd pretty much had it with our situation and being completely powerless to affect anything.

But then something happened. A union Executive came to the depot for the first time in a very long time. They explained things to us. They listened to us. I talked about how I felt abandoned by the Union and they agreed with me and understood how I felt.

Most important of all, I began to learn things. I learned about how a group of letter carriers just like me actually stood up to management and changed things for the better; not just for themselves, but for every letter carrier in the city. They encouraged us to take a seminar on how to work together to perform similar actions in our own workplaces.

Now this is the important bit. For the first time that I can recall in a decade, our Union is inviting us in and encouraging us all to be part of the process. And they're not doing it to be noble or generous. It is because it's essential.

This is how a union is supposed to work: by the contribution of many, not just the guidance (or gatekeeping) of a few. And we have already demonstrated that it can work, that we can do something when there is courage and consensus, and, most of all, company: strength in numbers.

Whether I have been personally harmed or not, it doesn't matter. Our crest reads, "An Injury to One is an Injury to All." To say and do nothing is an action for the status quo: and the status quo always favours the power and the oppressor. Our Union doesn't exist to serve individuals like a lawyer on retainer. It works for us all; but for that to happen, we must all work for it. So what that all means for me – a self-imagined "rugged individualist," but in truth, equal parts fearful and selfish – is that if I want things to keep improving, that I cannot stand idly by any longer. One cannot expect anyone else to do the work that one is unwilling to do oneself.

Oh, and I'm definitely still unwilling, but I am doing it for one reason: it is the right thing to do.

And here I am. I'm mostly alone. I'm anxious. I am not ready. But I'm doing it anyway. I don't yet know how much I can accomplish, but I do know that, alone, it will be very little. So come stand by me. Please. It will be easier for you because I'm already standing there by you. 📬

By Wendy Crispin, Shop Steward, InsideOut Committee member, and Mayfield letter carrier.

MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS COVERAGE

By Carl Girouard, National Grievance Officer

Mental Health is a serious issue in society and it is no different at the Post Office.

More than 30% of our members of our members who are off on Long Term Disability are off due to mental health issues. When we receive statistics for the Employee Assistance Plan (EAP), we see that for every quarter there is at least one member who is calling because they are at a risk of inflicting self-harm.

Increase in Counseling for Psychologist or Master of Social Work

We have agreed with Canada Post to increase the benefit level for psychological counseling from \$1,000 to \$2,000 effective Monday, September 23rd, 2019. This is an important improvement for our members who are suffering from mental health.

What Can You Do?

If you see a member who you think is having some mental health issues, approach them and see if they want to talk. If you see members getting teased, speak up. Make sure all members know how to contact a Social Steward as it is not always obvious to a member who is having mental health issues.

"An injury to one is an injury to all" – this is not just a saying. We need to look out for each other. 📬



FEAR AND LOATHING

A DEPOT 2 POST-RESTRUCTURE NIGHTMARE

By A. Duenas

A couple of nights ago, I saw myself in need of reaching out to some of my colleagues via text messaging about my experience working in a depot that has currently gone through a restructure. I had to reach out to them to vent, to report on what I had seen, and also as a warning for what's coming to other depots in the city.

I'll start by telling a bit about my experience as a letter carrier: I joined CPC in the Summer of 2018. For the most part, I did well. I was known amongst the temps and supervisors in my depot as someone who finishes routes and finishes them on time. (Residential door-to-door routes – please don't ask me about how I do on apartment, community mailbox, or business routes.)

I became permanent in the Summer of 2019 and ended up at another depot on an interim assignment. It went well. I was then shipped to another depot where I had been trained and covered a couple of routes without issue in the past.

But this time something was different. I really struggled to get through my first week. The second week was no different. There's something alarming and demoralizing about watching a depot turn from what was already an overwhelming work environment into a hellish post-restructure nightmare.

One thing that caught my attention right from my first day back at this depot was how much the mood of the work floor had changed. There's a dense feeling of collective misery that becomes infectious upon arrival. An alarming sight is the daily amount of full LFTs on the end of aisle carts – everything that couldn't be delivered the day prior.

Routes were designed to deliver 5+ bundles of flyers, mail, and packets in one stop. How is it possible that a depot loses routes and all over-assessed values? How can we take seriously the Corporation's commitment to safety when our overburdening concerns are just

met with more overburdening and increasing our chances of injury?

I've spoken to people with much more seniority than me, people who are route owners at this depot, and people who used to finish their routes every day who are now struggling. If you are lucky, you can only do two portions on a Monday. You then spend two days catching up and hopefully you have a decent Friday.


These post-restructure issues also raise a few concerns. If management suggests you focus on getting the colour of the day and personal contact items (PCIs) done because they know you might not finish, would you still be protected by the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) in case of injury? Would they claim you are at fault for not following their determined path of travel?

One thing that caught my attention right from my first day back at this depot was how much the mood of the work floor had changed. There's a dense feeling of collective misery that becomes infectious upon arrival.

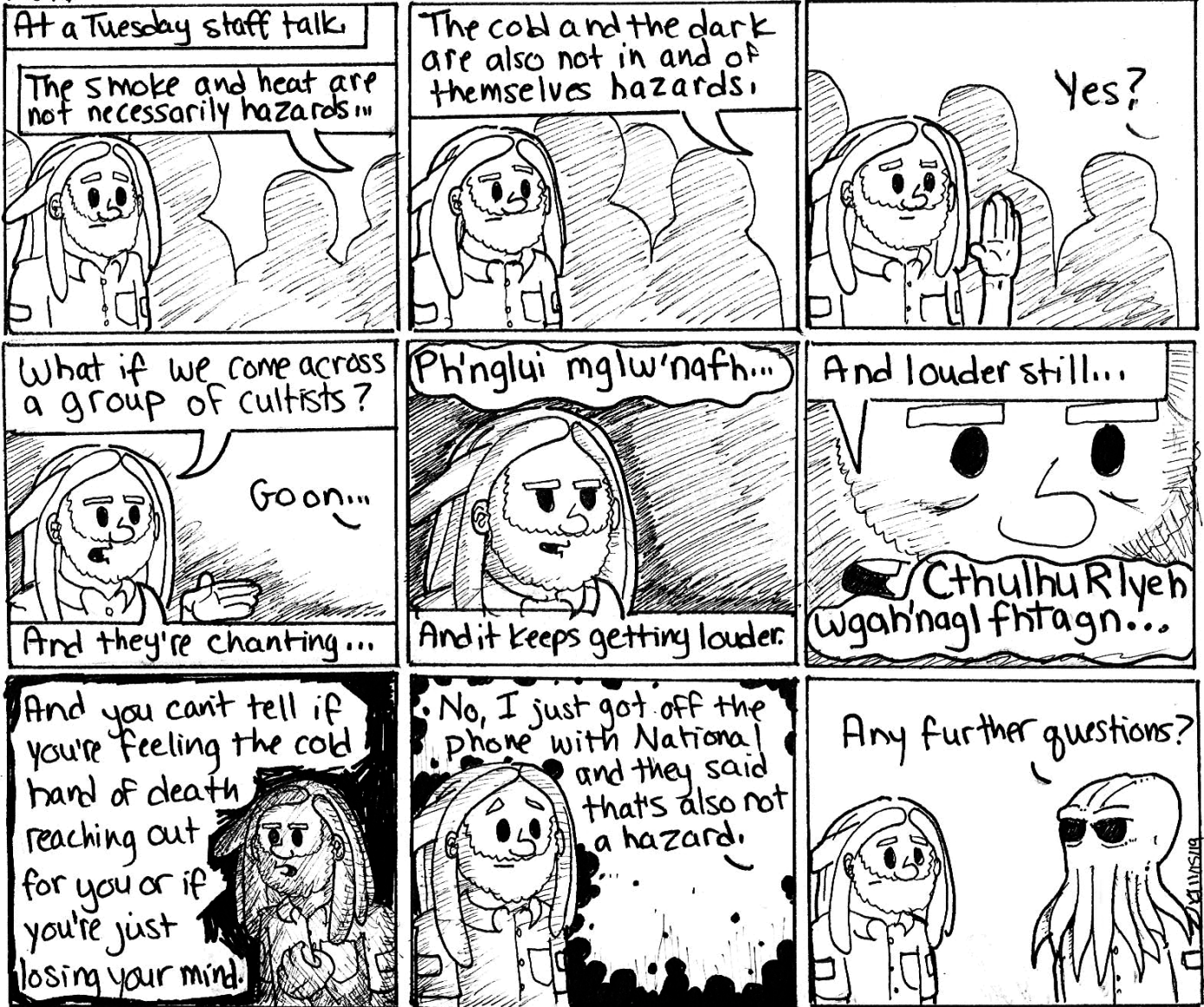
Are flyer volumes also taken into account when designing these routes? If I have to break up a loop or walk back to grab more flyers because they do not fit in my satchel, am I also breaking the path of travel by working safely?

Could this disaster be avoided if a depot felt like they had the support of all other postal workers in the city? Could this be avoided if all postal workers in the city felt like they had the support of National?

The recent wave of increased interest by the workers in taking part in organizing and being vocal on discussion and decisions within our Local gives me hope for the future, but much more organizing and awareness is needed into strategizing on how to fight back against the unfair incoming restructures.

An injury to one is an injury to all! 

No Relief



Kyle Turner, 2019

HEY DEPOT 2!

SISTERS, COUSINS, AND BROTHERS AT DEPOT 2, WE SEE YOU AND WE HEAR YOU. OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL DEDICATE MANY PAGES TO COVERING YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN THE WAKE OF YOUR RECENT, FRAUDULENT, RESTRUCTURE THAT HAS LEFT YOU REELING. PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR OPINION PIECES, STORIES, POEMS, CARTOONS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND ARTWORK DESCRIBING YOUR POST-RESTRUCTURE EXPERIENCE TO: EDITOR@CUPWEDM.NET

IF YOU'RE MORE OF A VERBAL STORYTELLER AND STILL WANT YOUR VOICE TO BE HEARD, TWO INSIDEOUT MEMBERS WILL BE COMING TO YOUR DEPOT BEFORE THE NEXT ISSUE TO COLLECT YOUR STORIES. WE WILL MAKE SURE A DELEGATE FROM YOUR WORKFLOOR PASSES ALONG THE DATE IN ADVANCE SO YOU CAN PREPARE.

IN SOLIDARITY,

THE INSIDEOUT COMMITTEE

HELPING HANDS

OPERATION FRIENDSHIP SENIORS SOCIETY

By Karry Biri, Chief Shop Steward Wickets and Affiliates.


Throughout the month of September, your Human Rights Committee set up an initiative to collect items for the less fortunate.

This year it was decided that the contributions would best benefit Operation Friendship Seniors Society, a non-profit that provides community-based preventative social services to the seniors of Edmonton's inner city. They [from their website] "provide safe, affordable non-institutional housing options."

Boxes were set up in each of the depots within the city and in the EMPP. With the generous support of members, we were able to collect over 600 items, from clothing and toiletries to non-perishable food items - it was an amazing sight to see.

The committee dropped off the donations to the center on October 24th. We had a car full of items to bring in but the people outside the center were so very helpful and volunteered to unload all the boxes and bags we had.

We thank all of the people who donated. Without you this endeavor could not have been as successful as it was!

For more information about Operation Friendship Seniors Society, you can find them online at www.ofss.org, contact them by phone at (780) 429-2626, or find them in person at 9526 106 ave, Edmonton, AB. 

WOMEN'S EQUINOX

RECLAIMING OUR POWER

By Kathleen Mpulubusi, Recording Secretary

On the weekend of October 18th-20th, 23 women gathered together for the annual Edmonton Local Women's Equinox. 2019 also marks the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the Edmonton Local Women's Committee, one of the oldest active women's committees in CUPW.

This year we decided to offer a course specifically developed for women by CUPW called Reclaiming Our Power, co-facilitated by Kristine Bowman and Kathleen Mpulubusi. The course looks at the history of women in the labour movement and their fight for equality and recognition.

We also studied the pervasive sexual stereotyping of women in media and sexual harassment. A major component of the course is Assertiveness Training to enable women to speak confidently and assertively in the workplace and in their lives.

The course was a good springboard for intense and frank discussions on being a woman activist in CUPW and asserting our equality in general. Although there are very fine words about equality - "respect" and "no harassment" in our constitution and other union documents - it is still often an intimidating environment for women to find their place.

The Equinox and our women's committees are places for sisters to meet with fellow, like-minded people to be encouraged, welcomed and recharged to go out and fight the good fight for all.

The Women's Committee is an open committee where all women (assigned female at birth or otherwise) are welcome to attend.


If you have ideas to share or you want to attend meetings, please email to kmpulu@gmail.com. 

PHOTO SUBMISSIONS



2019 Women's Equinox



Human Rights Committee with donations.



Human Rights Committee delivering donations.

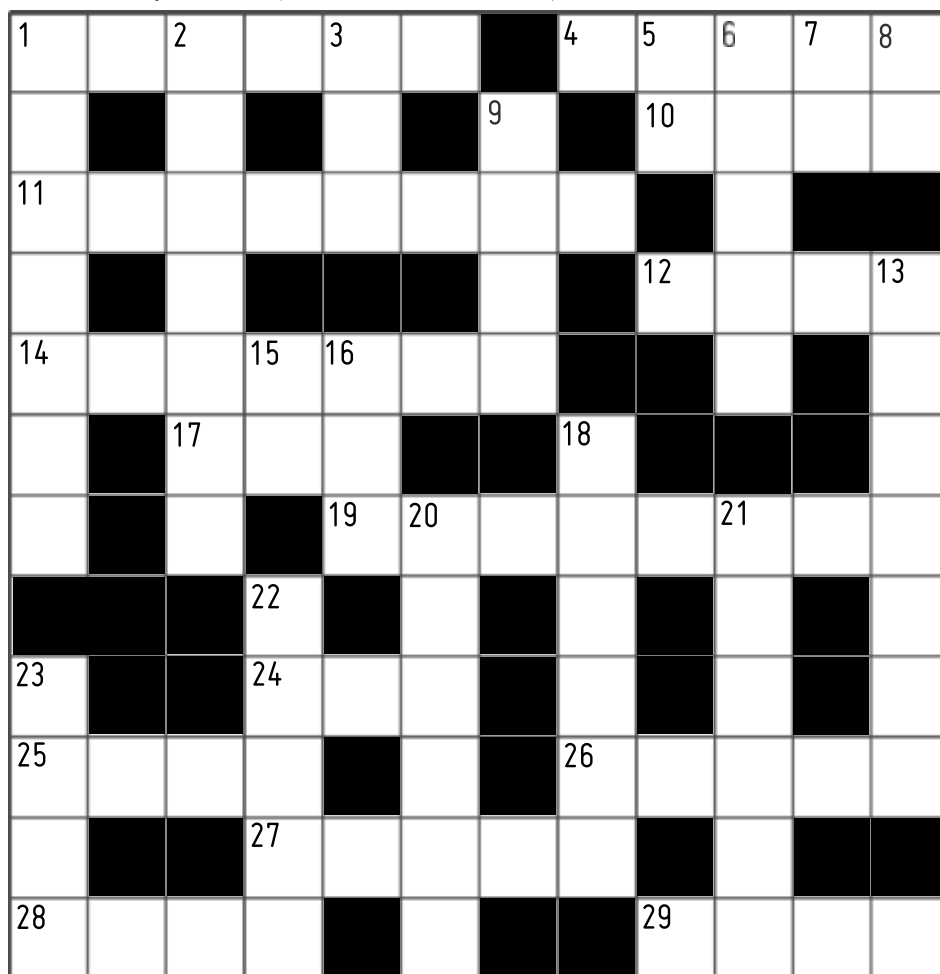


November 2nd: Hundreds march against UCP austerity.



November 2nd: A CUPW and IWW flag at the march.

Crossword by Nathen (Edmonton Downtown)



Overlooked missing clue from the previous puzzle!!!
Thanks to the eagle-eyed enigma experts who pointed it out. (don't peek at the answer!):

13 down: To facilitate learning

Solution to previous puzzle:



Across

- 1 he was elected Alberta leader of the New Democratic Party in 1968; finally winning a seat in the riding of Spirit River-Fairview in 1971
- 4 widely read Canadian author. His first book 'People of the Deer'; defender of the Inuit and endangered species
- 10 the "Last Spike" was driven 7 Nov, 1885
- 11 D-Day, the Allied invasion of France on 6 June, 1944
- 12 (acronym) Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- 14 at the end of WWII, this Democratic Republic was proclaimed an independent country on 2 Sept, 1945 by Ho Chi Minh
- 17 falsehood
- 19 _____ General Strike; from 15 May- 26 June 1919 approximately 30,000 organized and non-unionized workers struck in support of striking metal and construction workers
- 24 _____ Mahal ; mausoleum in Agra, India
- 25 _____ Arrow; Canadian supersonic, twin engine, all weather interceptor developed in the early 1950s
- 26 paved area in front of a hangar
- 27 _____ and Suburban Mail Carrier
- 28 a tract of land for producing crops or raising livestock
- 29 smallest particle of an element in which a balance exists between protons and electrons

Down

- 1 meaning 'our land' in Inuit dialects of the eastern Northwest Territories; borders were drawn in 1993 and officially separated from NWT in 1999
- 2 Museum of Palaeontology established at Drumheller in Sept. 1985
- 3 a period of time that utilizes a specific point in history as the basis of its chronology
- 5 suggesting an alternative
- 6 played as centre for the Edm. Oilers from 1979-1988
- 7 (acronym) artificial intelligence
- 8 (chem) thallium
- 9 first man
- 13 to negotiate the terms of a sale, exchange or other agreement
- 15 (chem) titanium
- 16 unused
- 18 type of leave
- 20 an _____ to one is an _____ to all
- 21 former CUPW National President for 15 years who wrote 'My Union, My Life'
- 22 to blow, hail, rain or snow violently
- 23 young whale or elephant

SOLIDARITY STYLE

OFFICIAL CUPW 730 T-SHIRTS



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To place an order: leave a message with the CUPW 730 office at (780) 423-9000 (ext 6) or email info@cupwedm.net with your full name, size choice, and contact information. We will be in touch as our stock is replenished. All regular proceeds go to printing more shirts. All extra 'comrade' proceeds go to the CUPW 730 Goods & Welfare Committee which helps members in financial hardship.

'tis the season.

