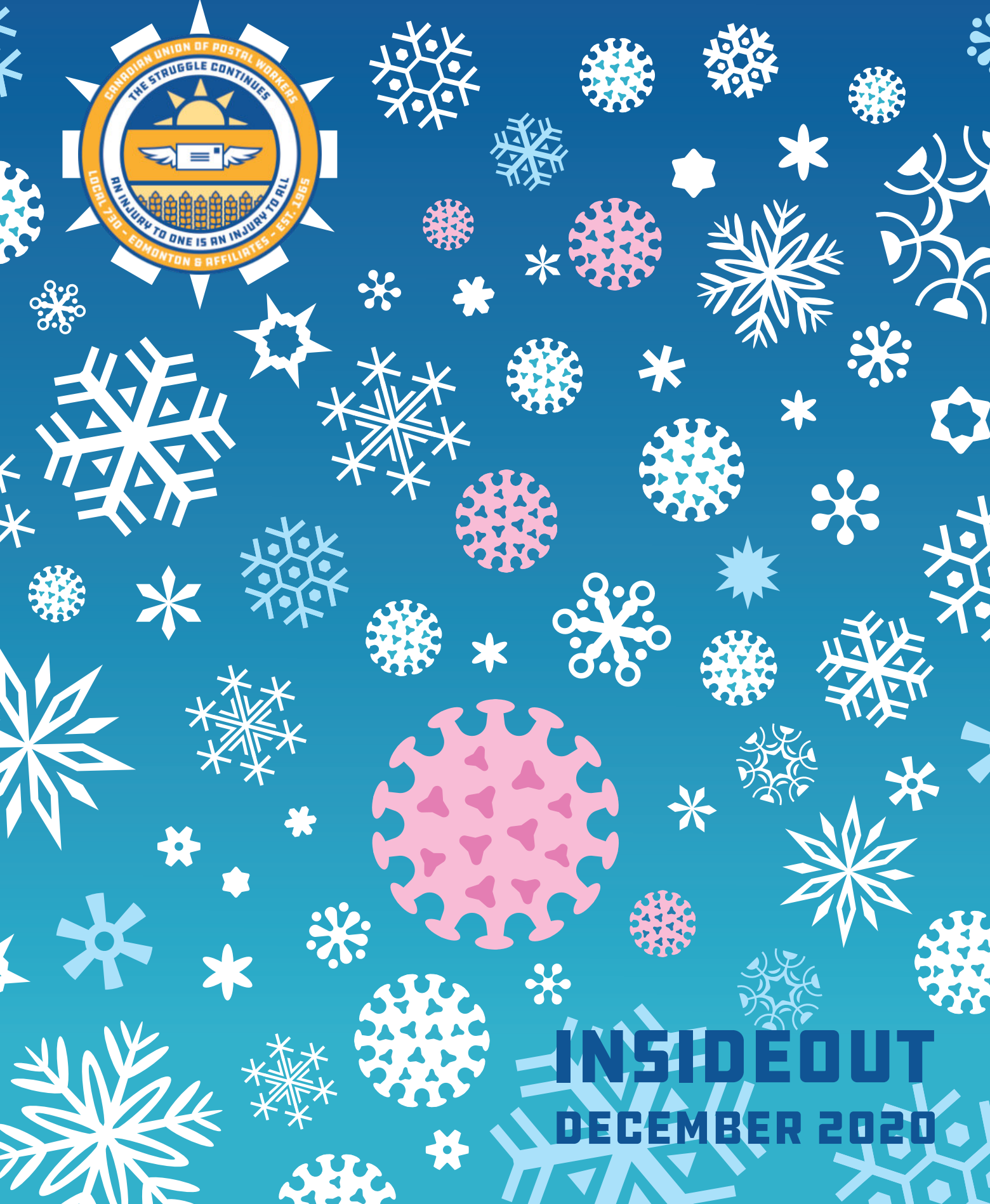


A PUBLICATION OF THE CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS LOCAL 730 EDMONTON + AFFILIATES



INSIDEOUT

DECEMBER 2020



INSIDEOUT is the monthly publication of the Edmonton Local of CUPW.

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

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

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

We will also publish Letters to the Editor should you feel an issue requires further discussion. All submissions are subject to editing for brevity, clarity, etc.

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

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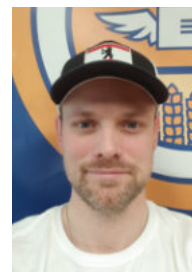
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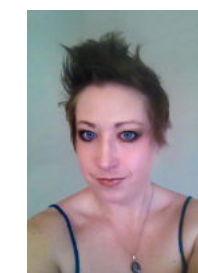
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT DECEMBER 2020

THE YEAR OF THE WILDCAT

Consult Season - The Grind Continues

From a bureaucratic perspective, October is by far the busiest month of the year in the union office due to the sheer amount of consults that need to be done. The only remaining major consults left will be for Urban vacation boards (tentatively Nov 18) and the EMPP rotation of duties consult (date tbd). Of special note were the consults for the EMPP which brought in over 60 new full time positions.

I wish I could say these new positions were a result of the strong, well-supported arguments that we always make for new positions but the reality is that CPC finally tripped over their own feet and had no choice but to bring in more workers. For years we told CPC that not creating more permanent positions would be a mistake, and for years they ignored us. June 2019 they cut positions, despite our objections at consult, citing that the era of parcel delivery growth was over. Even before the pandemic this was proven categorically false and when we requested positions be added last October, they repeated the same lie. Regardless of how we got the new positions, we are happy to have them because it will greatly help alleviate workloads in the EMPP and give more position openings on the day shifts for those that seek a better work-life balance. Detailed summaries of the consults can be found on the website.

The EMPP consults are always very difficult to organize and coordinate so I want to especially thank Cheryl and her

three EMPP chief stewards, Sanjay, Gary and Chris, for their exceptional efforts in involving the membership as well as advocating on their behalf. To them and all the many others helping with the various consults over the past month, a big thank you!

Prairie Covid-19 Updates

Sadly, there were four more instances in Edmonton over the past month of our members contracting C19 from outside work (Oct 7 - Delton, Oct 19 - Maintenance, Oct 22 - EDDD, Oct 31 - Shift 3 EMPP). In each case, proper cleaning protocol was followed, tracking was implemented, and everyone is recovering successfully.

The hard reality is that as cases continue to rise in Edmonton, the virus will continue to be brought unknowingly into our workplaces. We know full well that the safety protocols in place are only being followed by CPC to the extent that the workfloors force CPC to. If it isn't already apparent, CPC will not be an effective proactive leader on this front so it is up to us to push them to where they need to be. Staggered starts, and the availability of cleaning kits and PPE are all effective ways for us to make sure that if the virus makes it into the workplace, that it will be limited in its spread. On that note, we want to reaffirm our position encouraging all of our members to wear masks while inside at work. C19's real danger is how it's spread asymptotically; please wear a mask to insure that even if you unknowingly have it, you will drastically reduce your ability to spread it. Protect yourself by

respecting and protecting others. By thinking, and acting collectively, we will all be safer.

Contamination has become a big enough problem within CPC in Manitoba and Ontario that mask wearing is now mandatory in all their facilities. My feeling is that Edmonton operations is one internally transmitted incident away from CPC applying similar measures here. If we remain vigilant, wear masks, and insist on the safety protocols being followed, we can avoid the statistical likelihood of some of our co-workers being hospitalized.

Making The Best Of A Bad Situation

It's no secret that the leadership of our local had ambitious plans for educating and organizing our members, as well as doing outreach to other locals, before the pandemic diminished our abilities to engage in bigger group events and actions. Restrictions have made our organizing courses impossible to run effectively and doing them online would undermine the material. On that note, my trip to Winnipeg this past week to help them run their own Taking Back Our Workfloor courses was cancelled until further notice three days before I was supposed to arrive due to the above-mentioned covid-restrictions implemented in Manitoba. This is disappointing but I suspect that until a vaccine is released this part of strategy will be on hold.

At the local level, instead of waiting for the virus to subside, we've strived to keep empowering our members in safe

and more (pandemically) practical ways via reduced class sizes for courses that don't require mass group activities. In October, our two basic shop steward courses successfully signed up 18 out of all 18 participants; this amazing feat was partly achieved through a better screening of candidates via applicant questionnaires but also through improving on a lot of the material that was taught. Additionally, our two advanced steward courses helped 14 of our more established stewards sharpen their leadership skills to help our members.

None of this would be possible without the hard work of our newly trained facilitators Sanjay, Kathleen, Jill and James, as well as one established facilitator, Nancy. The work of our Education Committee chair, James, deserves special acknowledgment. Planning one course is difficult enough for someone new to the position; James successfully organized four courses in one month with the help of his committee. Truly excellent work, brother!

With the completion of these four courses, our education department will not be holding any more events until after the peak season is over. In the meantime, James, Natasha (Communications Officer) and Devon (Vice President - Organizing) have started developing new course

material and other education resources for our members that may be ready in time for mid-January. This kind of proactive energy to bring new opportunities to our membership hasn't happened as often as it should over the past decade so I'm very excited to see what they have in store for us.

Solidarity With AUPE Wildcat Strikes

The Oct 26 province-wide wildcat by AUPE health workers will be the first of many serious actions against the Kenney government by labour over the next year. To reiterate the statement I made earlier this week: AUPE's example was not only heroic but deeply instructive of how the labour movement needs to prepare itself if it is truly committed to defeating governments attacking workers. In this way, AUPE's struggle clearly mirrors our own: appeals and court challenges will not win us the day, we need to keep reforming all of our labour organizations to fully embrace an organizing programme as opposed to perpetually just talking about it. Any opportunity to support other unions doing this necessary work should be wholeheartedly embraced and encouraged.

Unfortunately, most unions have completely lost touch with this kind of approach and have to start entirely from scratch. Fortunately, the old guard

are fading away, and new, discontent activists and leaders are taking the reins to go in a new direction. AUPE is way ahead of the curve, and I've been working closely with their activists and organizers, and our allies in other unions, to try and win more unions over to more effective internal organizing strategies.

This is very slow work made all the more difficult by trying to do it from the outside. The best thing our local can do is: 1) help to keep building up our own fighting capacity so that we can lead by example should an opportunity present itself; 2) maintain the pronounced displays of solidarity just like our members have been doing since the beginning of the CESSCO lines and for the various AUPE actions over the past couple of weeks. If consults and court challenges are the embodiment of all the bureaucratic methods that have rotted our movement out from the inside, bolstering any example of any union fighting effectively will be our antidote. When we next make a call for our members to support another union, please consider that your solidarity now will only add to our strength when it comes our time to fight.

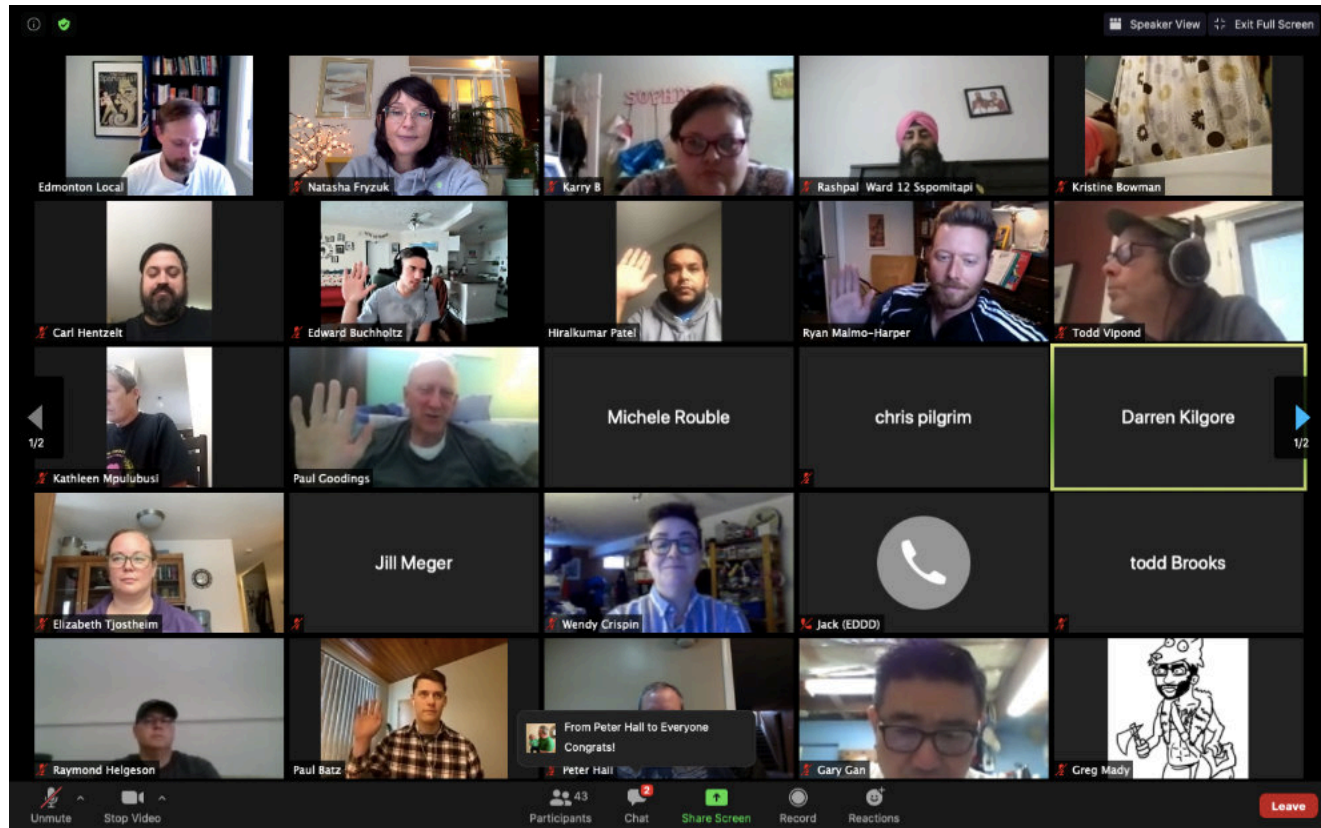
An injury to one is an injury to all!



By Roland Schmidt, Local President



JASON KENNEY IS CALLING IN THE AUSTERITY APPARATCHIKS TO JUSTIFY ATTACKING ALBERTA'S WORKERS



Swearing in of new Shop Stewards at November GMM online



Camp Pekiwewin was a prayer and relief camp organized by youth Black and Indigenous people of Colour to assist folks experiencing homelessness in Edmonton during a decrease in services during the pandemic. This photo is of a round dance that took place during Camp Pekiwewin's closing ceremony, after over 100-days of operation. Members of CUPW Local 730 were involved throughout the duration of the camp.

NOT EVEN A PANDEMIC CAN STOP THE UCP'S DRASTIC CUTS TO PUBLIC HEALTH. LAURA KRUSE ASSERTS IT'S TIME FOR LABOUR TO FIGHT BACK

By *Laura Kruse*
jacobinmag.com

November 2, 2020

In the Canadian province of Alberta, the United Conservative Party has enlisted accountancy firms to promote its agenda of economic liberalization, cloaking its partisan policies in the bloodless language of efficient management and accounting practices.

On September 2019, in the early days of the United Conservative Party's (UCP) majority government, Premier Jason Kenney took a trip to New York City to meet with hedge fund managers and right-wing intellectual luminaries about the value of investing in and supporting Canadian oil and gas extraction.

While Kenney was in the United States, he received the honor of "An Evening with Premier Kenney" staged by the Koch-funded Manhattan Institute, a right-wing think tank dedicated to "developing ideas that foster economic choice and personal responsibility" — that is, deregulation and privatization. Kenney described Alberta as the "beating heart of free-enterprise values in the Canadian political culture," and

outlined his plans to institute "ambitious market-oriented reform."

Austerity for the People

"Ambitious" is certainly one way of putting it. Among these proposed reforms were a cut in the corporate tax rate, making it one of the lowest in North America, a reduction in the regulatory requirements for oil and gas

"...a mandate to focus solely on reductions to government spending to bring about a balanced budget, conveniently ignoring the entire question of revenue — never mind the construction of a more progressive tax system."

extraction, "bringing balance back to labor legislation," and instituting aggressive cuts and wage rollbacks across the public sector. Kenney told his audience at the Manhattan Institute that Alberta's public sector had grown bloated on the back of the hard-working private sector.

In the year since that talk, the UCP government has been aggressive and single-minded in pursuit of its economic agenda, echoing the mantra, "Open for Business," that is so popular

amongst the Canadian right and center-right.

While an occasional private members' bill will crop up espousing more conservative cultural values, the overwhelming thrust of the UCP's legislative agenda is strict adherence to a regime of austerity — cuts to public services, the muzzling of organized labor, privatization, and tax cuts for corporations. All of this is justified by invoking the need for "cost-saving measures" for an out-of-control public debt.

Immediately upon taking power, the UCP appointed an expert panel tasked with reviewing Alberta's spending. The Blue Ribbon Panel on Alberta's finances was headed by former Saskatchewan minister of finance Janice MacKinnon, who had overseen draconian cuts in the 1990s, including the elimination of public programs such as dental care for children and universal drug coverage.

The panel received a mandate to focus solely on reductions to government spending to bring about a balanced budget, conveniently ignoring the entire question of revenue — never mind the construction of a more progressive tax system.

Champions of Audit Culture

Like governments of similar ideological bent the world over, the UCP likes to use a neoliberal Jedi mind trick,

(continued on next page)

JASON KENNEY'S AUSTERITY APPARATCHIKS

(continued from previous page)

appointing consultancy firm after consultancy firm, panel after panel, to give the illusion that its brutal cuts to public services rest upon a well-researched and considered technocratic rationale.

These panels and consultants serve the same function as organizations like the Manhattan Institute in the United States or examples elsewhere in Canada, like the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (of which Kenney was president) and the Fraser Institute.

These think tanks, reports, panels, commissions, and white papers manufacture the consent necessary to decimate the public sector, and to pave the way for the well-worn playbook of austerity: starve the public service of necessary funding so that it does not function properly, then introduce a privatized “solution” with virtually no public outcry or pushback.

The UCP gave \$3.7 million to McKinsey & Company to undertake a review of Alberta’s post-secondary sector modeled on the slash-and-burn mandate set out by Janice MacKinnon in the Blue Ribbon Panel report. As thanks to her hard work — and to keep a wolf in the henhouse — MacKinnon was appointed to the board of directors at the province’s flagship university, the University of Alberta.

In their Request for Proposal, the government directed McKinsey to find ways for the post-secondary sector to be “less reliant” on government grants, to receive more funding from student tuition payments, and to find “entrepreneurial approaches” to how programs are financed or delivered.

These directives are requests for political decisions be rationalized through audit-speak.

The UCP’s Request for Proposal, translated into normal language, is a call for the post-secondary sector to make allowances for private donations from corporations and the wealthy, for university research to be directed by corporate interests, and for higher costs to be passed on to individual students for a lower quality of education.

In addition, the McKinsey report is

“These think tanks, reports, panels, commissions, and white papers manufacture the consent necessary to decimate the public sector, and to pave the way for the well-worn playbook of austerity”

tasked with assessing the “viability” of many post-secondary institutions. This means consolidating the sector and shutting down smaller institutions, which are the ones that create bridging programs to higher academic streams.

Private Sector Gluttons at Public Troughs

As the “beating heart of free-enterprise values in the Canadian political culture,” Alberta is currently the only Canadian province that allows for the charter school model.

As a part of their “market-oriented reform,” the UCP removed the cap for charter schools. They did this right after cutting funding for public education to the tune of \$136 million and pushing

through the largest mass layoff in Alberta history in the education sector, during which over twenty thousand “non-essential” education workers were let go. In essence, they starved the district of funding and handed over the fractured system to private hands at public expense.

The UCP also scrapped an extensive curriculum review, only to appoint yet another “expert” panel to advise on future directions for Alberta’s public education — with zero representation for active teachers. The panel featured Ashley Berner, a researcher whose work is funded in part by the Charles Koch Foundation, and who supports public funding for charter and private schools.

No Fat for Public Health Care, No Lean for Ernst & Young

Most recently, Alberta Health Services (AHS), the provincial public health care system, has been seriously damaged by another of these “expert” reviews. Ernst & Young (EY), a consultancy firm which sunnily advertises its tax and assurance services as a commitment to “building a better working world,” was awarded a \$2 million dollar contract and tasked with a review of Alberta Health Services.

EY were asked to identify “efficiencies” and cost-savings, with zero input solicited on how these measures would affect patients or working conditions for health care professionals. The report, released in February 2020, called for increased marketization of senior care, the consolidation of maternity care in rural areas, and the privatization of laboratory, housekeeping, food, and laundry services in Alberta hospitals.

Some of these measures were put on ice when the collapse of oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic hammered Alberta. Kenney nevertheless continues to warn of a day of fiscal

reckoning. And the UCP are making good on this threat to public services, while ensuring that their pals in the corporate sector get a huge tax cut along the way. By accelerating the “Job Creation Tax Cut,” which was supposed to have been phased in over several years, they have helped ensure an estimated \$4.7 billion dollar hole in provincial revenues.

Despite the ongoing pandemic and public health crises, Alberta health minister Tyler Shandro announced on October 13, 2020 that up to 11,000 staff will be laid off from Alberta Health Services, in line with the recommendations of the EY report.

Additionally, they are proceeding with plans for the potential consolidation of services at smaller AHS facilities; the introduction of a co-pay for home care; increased accommodation fees for seniors in continuing care; and increased charges for supplies not covered by AHS.

Shandro claims that enacting these recommendations will “save” the province \$600 million; however, this makes little sense. Alberta journalist David Climenhaga describes Shandro’s plan as a “shell game in which the government pretends to be saving money on salaries while spending more on services contracted from for-profit corporations.” This shell game tactic is a UCP favorite, and is also being deployed in the move to provide public funding to private surgical clinics, including a proposed \$200 million dollar facility.

EY’s proposals for aggressive cuts will gouge a huge portion out of the membership of public sector unions such as the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE), further weakening a labor movement already reeling from the introduction of anti-democratic legislation intended to curtail the ability of unions to organize and advocate, both for their membership and for all working people in Alberta.

But workers in Alberta have had enough. On October 26, a province-wide wildcat strike saw health care workers walk off the job in protest of the UCP’s anti-worker agenda. Anger had been boiling for months, but the last straw, according to AUPE president Guy Smith, was the EY-recommended cuts to AHS staff.

These consultancy firms and panels leech off public money. They work within the bounds set out by the UCP — or whatever austerity-minded government employs their services — on the premise that “spending is out of control” and therefore, the only solution is massive cuts to public services.

Millions of dollars have been awarded over the last year and a half in contracts to provide an ideological smokescreen for the UCP’s brutal austerity regime. It is time for labor to fight back. The recent wildcat strikes are a sign that the fight has begun.



New COVID-19 cases in Alberta

Each black dot is the number of new cases on a given day. The red line is the average over the previous 7 days.



GIFT CARDS FROM MANAGEMENT:

A BREACH OF OUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

SEEMINGLY HARMLESS? THINK AGAIN.

Kristine Bowman

It has been brought to my attention that at least one member at the Edmonton Downtown Delivery Depot has received a Tim Hortons gift card as a reward for a health and safety check. **This is a violation of our Collective Agreement.**

Article 2.01 Rights states, "It is recognized that the Corporation exercises rights and responsibilities as management, which are subject to the terms of this Collective Agreement." Just because management claims it has the right to manage, management still needs to follow the Collective Agreement when doing so.

Article 3.02 Consultation and Discussion reads, "In view of this recognition and in accordance with structures provided for in this Collective Agreement, the parties agree to discuss and consult each other on all matters pertaining to their working relationship." Because of this, awards for anything outside of the "years of service recognition program" is a breach.

Article 3.01 Sole and Exclusive Bargaining Agent, which grants CUPW the sole and exclusive right to negotiate working conditions and remuneration. CPC has not consulted with the Local regarding the awarding of gift cards for any reason, let alone health and safety. CPC has also unilaterally chosen who the recipients of such awards will be.

This gift card violates Appendix A, as the constituted payment for work that exceeds the negotiated rates of pay. Further articles are also violated, such as 1.01 (Purpose), 8 (Labour-Management Meetings), and 37.01 (Conditions Not Covered).


Our union's position is that CPC is contractually obligated to conduct meaningful consultation before handing out gift

cards.

Only through such consultation could CUPW's concerns with the potentially discriminatory impact on employees who did not receive them be addressed. Through a gift card program, CPC is enhancing the wages and compensation package negotiated into the terms of our Collective Agreement; in this case, CPC is going directly to the employees and bypassing our union.

This creates an unfair situation because we all work under the Collective Agreement and are assessed against the same standards. Gifts are, effectively, an increase in pay, and this selective health and safety reward program damages the bargaining unit and CUPW's exclusive right to negotiate for higher standards of pay for all employees.

This is a concern because wage rates constitute a fundamental provision of our Collective Agreement and represent a negotiated benefit. If CPC is free to reward selected employees at difference levels for work performance through the application of a gift card program, the status of CUPW's authority as our exclusive bargaining agent is now compromised and our Collective Agreement is now of limited value.

As a result of these concerns, CUPW is seeking an award of equal value to the gift card award to be awarded to every member who performs similar duties (letter carriers, RSMCs, MSCs), as well as any award of \$250 to CUPW Local 730 for the violation of its sole right to be the exclusive bargaining agent. 




HEY TEMPS! THIS IS FOR YOU!

YOU'VE GOT RIGHTS, BUT DO YOU KNOW HOW TO USE THEM?

Natasha Fryzuk

Our Chief Steward Maintenance, Todd Vipond, consistently prioritizes communicating with new hires to make sure they know their rights from the outset. Those of us who've been around for a while know there is no end to management's efforts to take advantage of our labour, but this can come as a shock to many of our newest members.

There are a few key things Todd would like all Temp employees to know. They are as follows, in no particular order.

- ▶ You can have up to three reviews with management before your 480 hour mark. You have the right to bring a Shop Steward with you into these reviews. If you don't believe the review you got was fair, reach out to a Shop Steward or the union office (780-423-9000) for help.
- ▶ Know your Shop Stewards. Take a photo of the Shop Steward List (posted in all work facilities) to have it at the ready.
- ▶ When you are covering a long term assignment, you gain the rights of the type of employee your assignment is covering. This means you are guaranteed the hours that the assignment has (full-time or part-time). The assignment belongs to you for the duration of the absence you are covering.
- ▶ You are allowed an eight hour work day. If you see you will not be able to complete your work within that eight hours, contact management (ideally) two hours before the end of your shift and ask them what they would like you to prioritize.
- ▶ For Letter Carrier assignments, your time allotment to collate flyers falls within your eight hour shift.
- ▶ You have the right to refuse unsafe work. For example, if you are on a letter carrier assignment on a route and working in the dark, you won't see tripping hazards or know when to expect dogs. If you are out there later than the route owner, customers won't expect you and will let their dogs loose in their yards. Additionally, if you are getting wet in snowy, freezing temperatures you need to prioritize your own health and safety so that you can continue to work moving forward.
- ▶ Article 44 in our Collective Agreement is just for Temps. You can find a digital copy of the Collective at cupw730.ca under the Resources tab. On that same page you will find a copy of Temp Rights for Urban Members.
- ▶ As a Temp you have the right to attend union meetings and take educationals offered through your local union office. Note that if you attend an educational during work hours, you will get paid through the union.
- ▶ Track your hours and location everyday privately, regardless of facility. Additionally, always write your name, employee ID, and hours worked down in the sign-in sheet. You can check your hours and location online in the Time Management section to see if the corporation's records match up with your journal. 

WORKPLACE BULLYING

HOW TO KNOW IF IT'S HAPPENING TO YOU, AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Kyle Turner.

I've been hearing about a troubling number of incidents of workplace bullying by supervisors coming out of the Rosedale depot. Several years ago, I was bullied to the point of leaving the depot. I hesitated to return to it even after moving to the neighbourhood because spending an hour on the bus felt like the better option.

It's currently peak season and we're also dealing with a pandemic. Tensions will be high, but the job is also hard enough as it is, and you certainly don't need someone breathing down your neck and making you feel worthless. In the following, I offer some tips for what to do if you are experiencing or witnessing bullying in the workplace.

Why am I being bullied?

You might be wondering why you're being bullied, and that is a fair thing to wonder, but it is hard to find an answer. It would involve knowing what made someone want to become management or what made them not leave the first time they received an order from higher up to bully a worker. I once learned from a co-worker that the supervisor who bullied me was once talking about how he was a bully when he was younger but that he feels he has come a long way. (He hadn't.)

Sometimes supervisors begin to bully, intimidate, or enforce the rules more forcefully because they are trying to leave a paper trail to show they are worthy of a promotion. Other times it might be bonus-related, though

management likes to claim there are no bonuses. But there is always the spectre of the numbers. Gotta keep the numbers down, or up, depending on the situation. A (now former) Manager of Rosedale once came to a staff talk to tell us we had the most injuries, that it was disgusting and we should be ashamed – this was presumably because of pressure about the numbers.

Whatever the case, it's not your fault. CPC keeps piling on more work and expecting us to do it in the same amount of time, if not for us to do it faster. If you're not finishing the

"If you feel like you are experiencing it, you are."

workload, it's probably because it's not really meant to be finished because someone in the corporate Route Measurement office was more concerned about a bonus than your mental or physical health. Do your best, but know you're being set up to fail.

Bullying and the Collective Agreements

Bullying and intimidation are violations of the Collective Agreement, but CPC will, of course, do as it pleases. Article 5.01 in both the Urban and RSMC collective agreements covers bullying:

"There shall be no discrimination, interference, restriction, coercion, harassment, intimidation, or stronger disciplinary action exercised or practised with respect to an employee by reason of age, race, creed, colour, national origin, political or religious affiliation, sex, physical or emotional handicap, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, family status, conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been

received, or membership or activity in the Union."

This didn't stop a supervisor from telling me that when he was my age he was married and had twins or that I should be "pushing a pencil somewhere," or that I should shave and get a real job or whatever it was. When all this happened, though, I was too new to realize what was going on. As I slowly shared my experience with other people, I began to realize that it didn't seem right – and my co-workers told me as much.

Bullying and intimidation work like this: if you feel like you are experiencing it, you are. I once approached a relief supervisor with a letter carrier and another member who was trained in route measurement to talk about a poorly designed route and how the carrier was feeling bullied and intimidated by how the supervisor was showing up on the route every day. The supervisor responded, "That's not bullying. Bullying is something else," and he then went to tell management that he felt we were bullying him.

Certain perks come with being a permanent employee, but even if you are a temp, management does not have the right to bully or intimidate you. Temp rights are covered under Article 44, which includes Article 5.01. If they want to fire you, which is often the content of the threats, there is a procedure that they have to follow. It's not enough for a bully supervisor to be mad one day for you to lose your job.

I am being bullied, what do I do?

If you are being bullied, there are a few routes you can take. Whichever route you chose, I would recommend documenting every incident and filing it with our union office so we can have representatives who are aware of the situation.

The first approach you can take when dealing with a bully supervisor is to take the procedural route and file a grievance or a formal complaint. I don't think either of these are particularly effective as, based on what I've witnessed, CPC doesn't really care. They will investigate themselves and come back with the conclusion that things are fine enough. The thing is that CPC knows who the bullies are. They get promoted or moved around. Sometimes they end up on a special project where they are told to check flyers and not talk to anyone. Whatever the case, the situation never really seems to go away.

The second approach – the one I think is most effective – involves bringing in your co-workers. Bullies tend to leap into action if they think you are alone or that no one around you cares. Find a Shop Steward or anyone else who might be willing to be a witness if you think you're about to be bullied by a supervisor or if the conversation starts moving in that direction. The tone of the conversation tends to change

quickly when there are witnesses. If you wish to file a grievance or formal complaint, getting statements from witnesses will also help bolster your argument.

For a more creative solution to this problem if it persists, I would highly recommend using the Right to Complain (Article 9.07 under the Urban agreement and 9.02 under the RSMC agreement). If you can combine this with our right to refuse unsafe work and the Corporation's failure to provide for a safe working environment, you might be able to accomplish something substantive.

Conclusion

Your co-workers will most likely have been bullied at some point or they will know who the bullies in the depot are. Ask around and be prepared. If you're a more senior employee, keep your eyes open for newer employees and talk to them or insert yourself into a situation if you see bullying and intimidation happening.

The Corporation has a history of enabling a toxic work environment, and their behaviour shows that they either don't know or don't care. Or maybe the Corporation doesn't see harmful behaviour hurting their profits, so they don't take it as an issue. Whatever the reason is, we cannot expect the Corporation to protect us from being bullied or intimidated – at least not beyond putting up posters about the Employee Assistance Program.

It is important to remember that collective problems don't have individual solutions. Unfortunately, it is up to us to let management this behaviour is not welcome in our workplace. However, we will be stronger if we stand together.





NO MORE BUSINESS AS USUAL: THE ONLY STRATEGY WE HAVE LEFT IS DIRECT ACTION

Edward Buchholtz

The most important takeaway from the recent issue of National's Perspective magazine is buried within interviews with two of CUPW's Chief Negotiators, Nancy Beauchamp and Sylvain Lapointe. Given no special mention, it's easy to miss because it so perfectly describes what we think of as 'business as usual' that we don't normally give it a second thought. I'm referring to Nancy's comment about "How [Canada Post's negotiators] refuse to bargain in good faith, and their closed-mindedness, and propensity to stall and wait for special legislation."

We need to start talking about this situation as the crisis it is: Our employer is actively colluding with the government in order to unlawfully and immorally interfere with peaceful labour negotiations, and our union leaders in Ottawa are either unable or unwilling to stop it. If Canada Post and the government won't play by their own rules, then we shouldn't either. It's time to use our collective power to end the status quo, and I want to share with you my vision and plan for how to accomplish that.

Some Notes on the Canada Labour Code

Some of these ideas would involve engaging in so-called illegal activities that would violate the Canada Labour Code. Striking outside of negotiations is illegal. As is using strikes to settle disputes outside of the government-

prescribed Grievance Arbitration Process.

Some workers would argue that the Canada Labour Code ought to be respected because it is the foundation of our protection against an unlawful employer. In fact, I would argue that the opposite is true. The Canada Labour Code was written to protect employers from workers by regulating how and

“Our employer is actively colluding with the government in order to unlawfully and immorally interfere with peaceful labour negotiations, and our union leaders in Ottawa are either unable or unwilling to stop it.”

when workers are allowed to bargain with management. Because these regulations require a permanent bureaucracy, what happens is that even the most passionate defenders of workers' rights become mostly powerless bureaucrats who are now often physically removed from the work floor and the workers they wanted to protect in the first place.

This system was designed by governments and corporations intentionally to keep unions unorganized, inflexible, and too

preoccupied with regulations and consultations to engage in the unprofitable business of striking. The government, despite owning Canada Post, has no right or authority to regulate how we, organized labour, conduct our business with Canada Post. We must organize ourselves and fight together. Only then will we have the power to improve our working conditions and end the government's interference in our business.

Strikes

Striking is and always has been the most powerful way for a group of organized workers to gain concessions from management. Without the strikes and the willingness to engage in them, we are powerless and without leverage. The government knows this and so they put limits on when we can strike and threatens us with fines if we don't comply.

But the reality is – and it always has been – that they need us more than we need them. That's why strikes are so effective. We are the ones who collect, sort, and distribute mail, not them. So from now on, I say that any negotiation with Canada Post (and their government benefactors) must demand recognition that strikes can and will happen at any time and that any one of the following reasons be seen as a just cause to strike.

- Refusing to recognize our right to strike
- Any attempt to needlessly delay negotiations
- Any government interference or

the appeal for government interference

- Any government fines or penalties
- Any attempt to discipline striking membership

With such a powerful tool at our disposal, we could change laws and topple governments. Our allies in the Alberta labour movement are organizing rapidly and we need to do the same because if we can help them in their struggle, then they can help us in ours. Having allies in battle is never a bad thing.

Talk to your co-workers about striking. How do they feel? Would they be willing to engage in an “illegal” (also known as a wildcat) strike? If not, why not? And if so, for what cause? If you could change three things about your workplace, what would those things be? Who in your depot on or on your shift could stand up to management and lead a strike? Create a strategy and a plan. This is the only way we will ever be treated as equals at the bargaining table.

Open Negotiations

Who benefits from closed-door negotiations? Canada Post. We don't get to see the faces and learn the names of the people who attempt to lower our compensation and worsen our working conditions. We don't get to experience the agonizingly slow bureaucratic process or Canada Post's refusal to negotiate while they stall for time and wait for the government to save them.

Now we have the technology to link thousands of people together in a meeting thanks to programs like Zoom and live-streaming platforms like Twitch. Thousands of CUPW members

actively listening and watching as negotiations proceed would place an incredible amount of pressure on Canada Post's negotiators, knowing that anything they say would be on record and immediately known to our entire union.

Imagine, we would be able to see the pressure we're applying by striking in real-time. We need to demand that all CUPW members have the right to observe any and all negotiations between Canada Post and CUPW, and once COVID-19 is no longer a concern, negotiation meetings shall also be open for all members to observe in-person.

Sometime in the coming months, our Local will be holding a General Members Meeting to determine what demands we want National to fight for. Be sure to attend and vote for motions and delegates that will demand open negotiations.

Self-Management

Self-management is the strategy of denying the authority of the employer by voluntarily taking on the task of managing how work gets done at Canada Post. It is an alternative strategy that can be done with or without striking. Who would you trust more to adhere to the Collective Agreement, the corporate-appointed Manager with quotas and incentives for “good performance”? The supervisor who is notorious for power-tripping, harassment, and responding with “Don't like it? Grieve it,” whenever they are challenged?

How about the democratically elected workers' council comprised of your peers on the work floor? We are more

than capable of handling our own scheduling, seniority, and safety procedures; and we're certainly more than capable of making sure the work gets done, seeing as how we are the ones that actually do it. Management will resist this arrangement, obviously, by accusing us of insubordination and threatening us with discipline, but if we are willing to fight back with work stoppages, they will have no choice.

The Local's Education Committee can be tasked with providing the training and skills necessary to usurp management's power. Such courses would be open to all members to prevent gatekeeping – the practice of limiting knowledge to a select few.

Weaponizing Grievances

Acquiring the grievance system was, at one time, a big victory for CUPW. Since then, management has learned how to use it against us by frequently violating the terms of the Collective Agreement – so often, in fact - that filing a grievance often feels pointless. How did we allow ourselves to get to the point where settling a simple dispute takes years and where a complex, union-wide issue can take a decade or more?

Remember, the Grievance Arbitration System was imposed on us by the government and designed to benefit employers. We can fight back against the abuse of the system the same way we fight against other abuse – strikes! If management were to be warned that a set amount of grievances filed against them would result in strike activity, I think we would see a swift change in management's attitude

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NO MORE BUSINESS AS USUAL

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toward the threat of a grievance. It also has the added benefit of turning managers against each other, as repeat offenders will be singled out and they will start to blame each other for losses in productivity.

It is time to end the abuse of this broken system. Talk to your co-workers about the grievances they've experienced and imagine how much easier and faster it would be if these disputes were resolved by the threat of a strike. The Collective Agreement is supposed to be just that, an agreement. If management refuses to uphold their part of the deal, then we should be under no obligation either.

Supporting Each Other

If you have read this far, you have probably thought that one or more of these points are easier said than done. This is absolutely true. None of this will be easy to accomplish. I recognize that

I am advocating for escalating conflict with our employer and conflict will likely be long and bitter. But the simple truth is there is no other option. There are no diplomatic or legal means for us to use to challenge Canada Post.

Strikes and uncertainty will be inevitable, but we can alleviate some of the pain by preparing beforehand. Demand full amnesty from any fines or discipline. Demand that management pay for the cost of catching up on delayed mail. Establish a personal strike fund to cover unpaid days on the picket line. If possible, make a donation to our union's Goods and Welfare Fund to help members who are going through financial difficulties.

The more we help each other, the stronger we are. The stronger we are, the more we can start fighting back against management in increasingly creative ways. We will all need to work together to get us through this crisis.

If any of these ideas sound good to you, then I need you to act. First, I would encourage you to sign up for the Local's "Taking Back Our Workfloor" course. It's a one-day course and you

are paid to attend. It covers how to organize against and how to confront management to solve local issues. Recently, participants in the course have used these skills successfully to acquire more parking at Depot 2 (where there was none), as well as to confront a bully supervisor at Delton.

Second, talk to your co-workers about their frustrations. "The union" is not just the elected leaders of the union or the Local. The union is us, but only when we work together. And we need to work together if we want Canada Post to treat us as equals at the negotiating table. ✉

Edward Buchholtz is a relief letter carrier at Delton Depot.

(The Communications Committee invites comment on, or discussion of opinion pieces it presents. "Letters to the Editor" will be considered for future editions. All submissions are subject to editing for clarity; entries of a non-respectful, abusive, deliberately misleading or derogatory nature will not be considered.)

KENNEY'S HALF MEASURES SET US ON PATH TO A CANCELED CHRISTMAS

By Robbie Kreger-Smith

November 25, 2020

<https://politicalrnd.ca>

🐦 @PoliticalRnD

After ten days hiding from accountability and doing his job, like a groundhog Jason Kenney emerged from his hibernation today to deliver a verdict on Alberta's future.

One would have hoped that the Premier would see the dark shadows his inaction and lack of leadership have cast on Alberta, but alas it wasn't meant to be.

Instead of finding his spine and providing meaningful leadership and action to prevent the impending tsunami of death and destruction that is barreling towards our economy and healthcare systems, he offered a series of half measures and rehashing of current Covid19 restrictions that will merely delay the impending broad-based lockdown that he seeks to avoid.

Kenney started off the press conference almost 20 minutes late, after having already delayed it from this morning because "they needed time to develop communications for these complex measures," according to a government source.

This pandemic started in February and hit its first crescendo in March as we locked down then, presumably to give the government time to prepare for a situation similar to what we find ourselves in today. Apparently 8 months was too short a time for the partisan hacks who are paid \$14

million dollars a year to advise our government in communications and issues management.

He started off with his oft cited concerns about mental health and business support as a justification for avoiding lockdown.

The provincial government has prioritized the economy above human lives and sustainability of our healthcare system almost exclusively since day one. If they truly cared about mental health and wellness, they would provide psychological care as part of the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan.

This is a case of crocodile tears where the people with the levers of power to effect change choose to not employ them.

Premier Kenney stated that there was not one known case of transmission in personal services like hair salons.

He neglected to mention that over 80% of transmission is unknown – because Alberta has effectively stopped all contact tracing for the past month. He's stating confidence in data that simply doesn't exist, because his government failed to adequately expand contact tracing capacity through hiring and training in anticipation of a second wave.

He announced that masking would be mandatory in Alberta's two largest cities, something that has been the case since summer.

He announced that there would be a ban on private social gatherings, but that there would be no enforcement.

In other words, we are relying on more personal responsibility, the Covid19 control plan that has brought us to be the worst in Canada in absolute and per capita cases.

The government is allowing movie theatres, museums and galleries, casinos with slot games, amusement parks, water parks, bingo halls, and racing centres to remain open. They are allowing indoor fitness, recreation, sports and physical activity centres, dance and yoga studios, martial arts, gymnastics and private and public swimming pools to continue to operate (though with capacity limits).

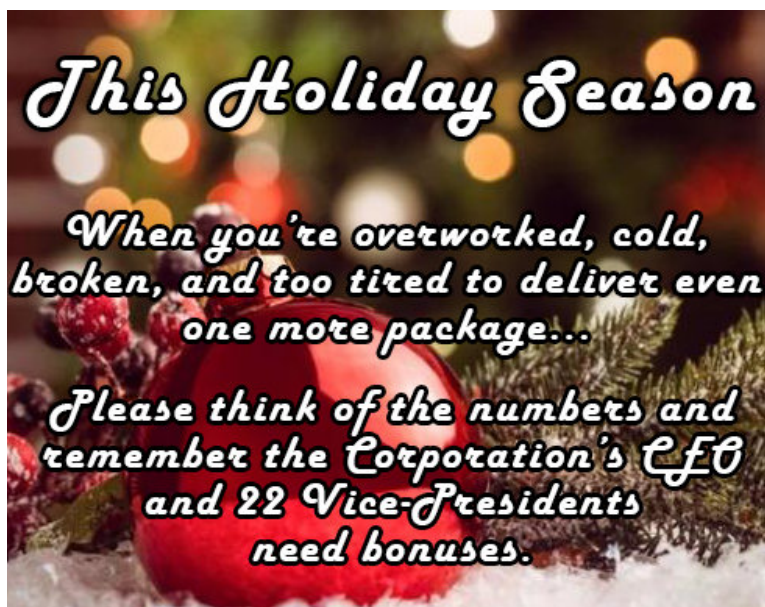
Essentially if you're spending money to have a good time you are protected from Covid19.

Kenney pointed out that the WHO has advised against using lockdowns as a primary means of pandemic control due to the associated mental health and wellness risks.

The point that is lost on the premier is that with the current state of our cases and transmission rates we are past primary control measures.

The half measures he enacted today might have been meaningful a month or two ago when our health system wasn't nearing or over capacity in ICUs, and when doctors and opposition were calling for them. His insistence that there was a (false) dichotomy of choices that included only locking down or only protecting the economy brought us to where we are today.

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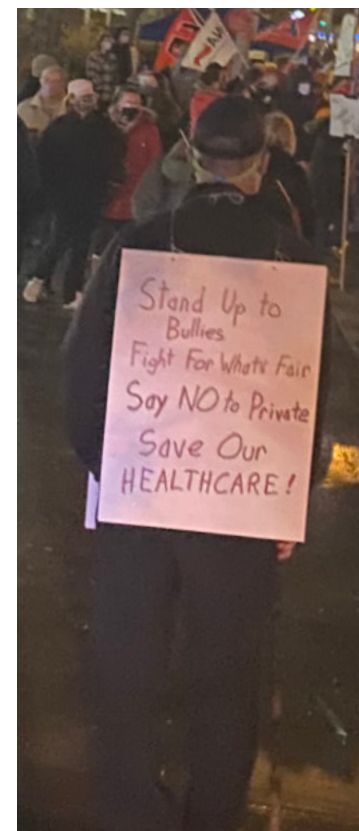




IN THE STREETS



HOLDING THE LINE



CUPW members showing up for AUPE workers and striking Boilermakers: any opportunity to support other unions at their rallies or on their picket lines should be wholeheartedly embraced and encouraged.



WE REMEMBER



AND THEN WE FIGHT

Kathleen Mpulubusi
Women's Committee Chair

On December 6, 1989 a lone gunman entered the École Polytechnique in Montreal, separated the men from the women and opened fire. Fourteen women died because they were women. No other reason. December 6, 2020 is the 31st anniversary of this tragic day. In 1991, Parliament declared December 6th a National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. It is also known as White Ribbon Day. And has anything really changed since?

In 2017, 84% of homicide victims in Canada killed by a current or former intimate partner were women. In the first 8 months of 2018 alone, 106 women and girls were killed in Canada, primarily by men. Indigenous women and girls continue to be killed at a rate 6 times higher than others. 68 out of 100 domestic violence victims are women and it is increasingly recognized that transgender and non-binary people are also commonly victims. There are over 550 shelters across Canada with approximately 75% of people being turned away because the shelters are full. On April 23, 2018, ten people were killed in a Toronto van attack by a perpetrator who was allegedly motivated by misogyny. It was the deadliest terror attack on

Canadian soil since the École Polytechnique massacre.

Alberta holds the dubious distinction of having one of the highest rates of domestic violence in Canada. There are over 50 shelters in Alberta with many operating at almost full capacity most of the time. The problem is particularly acute on reserves and in rural areas where it can be difficult to access services. And now in 2020 there is the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Covid-19 Global Pandemic has greatly exacerbated the issue of domestic violence. Self-isolation measures, orders to stay home, and limited social interactions means it is even more difficult for anyone experiencing domestic violence to escape or get help. Staying home may be the safest way to avoid Covid-19 infection but for domestic violence victims home is not safe. Since the global pandemic began in March there has been a 20-30% increase in domestic violence rates across Canada. As Canada goes, so goes the world. The United Nations is calling this "The Hidden Pandemic" - this horrifying surge in domestic and gender based violence is global.

There are many ways that Covid-19 may specifically impact those living with domestic violence. The abusive partner may withhold sanitizer and

disinfectants and give frightening misinformation about Covid-19. Forced isolation may be harder to recognize during physical distancing. Travel restrictions may impact a survivor's escape plan. An abusive partner may make the survivor go outside the home and then blame them if they get sick.


Domestic and gender-based violence affects everyone at all levels of society and in all places of society. Both victims and perpetrators are in the workplace. As of September 1, 2019, the updated Canada Labour Code says that employees are entitled up to 10 days of Domestic Violence Leave per calendar year. For employees with 3 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 violence. If you have a child who has been victimized then you are entitled to this leave.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been particularly hard on women and families and has shown the inadequacy of support for services that we rely on. And so the fight continues. 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.

There are many resources and options available for anyone dealing with domestic violence. In our workplace you can access the EAP (Employee Assistance) program or phone 211 for referral to local resources. There are also social stewards in many facilities that can help.

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (acws.ca) has an excellent website with lots of resources.

At the Dec 6 GMM (6-8 pm) there will be a special commemoration ceremony to mark the sorrowful École Polytechnique anniversary. We will ask for a moment of silence to remember all the victims of gender-based violence. The fight for gender equality and the end to gender violence is the longest fight of all spanning millennia and centuries. The price we pay is too high a cost for all of us. 

*If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call **911**.*

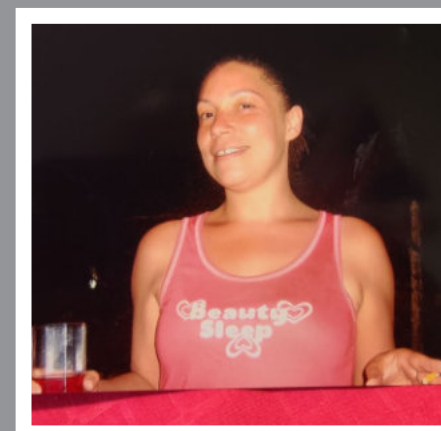
*To speak with a women's shelter, call a 24/7 hotline at **1-866-331-3933***

To locate a shelter near you, visit acws.ca/shelters or sheltersafe.ca

*If you suspect a child is at risk, it must be reported. **1-800-387-5437 (KIDS)***



The 14 victims of the École Polytechnique massacre, December 6, 1989



IN MEMORIAM

Carol Smith
EDDD

KENNEY'S HALF MEASURES

(continued from page 17)

Health Minister Tyler Shandro then got up to tell us that “we’re not going to regulate our way out of the pandemic,” and that we needed to change our behaviours; Basically echoing Kenney’s call for ‘more personal responsibility’ – the Covid19 containment plan that has failed us into the unenviable position of worst jurisdiction in Canada.

Preferred Edmonton Journal stenographer to the Premier, David Staples, then chimed in with a question about lockdowns and resisting them, to which the Premier came to the lectern to declare that Alberta’s Covid management was very successful to date compared to the USA and Europe – as if this was some sort of accomplishment, again neglecting the fact we are far and away the worst performers in all of Canada.

Kenney touted the ABTraceTogether App, which has cost nearly \$1 million and provided a grand total of 19 exposure notifications for the entire province.

He then justified not doing more because of Charter Section 1 jurisprudence – saying restrictions on individuals’ freedoms weren’t justified by a public health emergency. Unfortunately for Kenney, the Premier of Ontario, with whom he touts a bromance so close that they finish each other’s sentences, has instituted those same lockdowns that apparently can’t be done here just this week, while Ontario has the same or less actual case numbers and about a third per capita of what we now have.

Protecting the economy and human health and life are not mutually exclusive goals. In fact, they are conjoined at the hips.


Look at Australia and New Zealand who enacted tough lockdown and quarantine procedures for a few short weeks and were then able to return to very close to normal lives.

Sports stadiums are currently packed down under, because their governments gave a rip enough to see the big picture and how the economy, public health, and human life interlocked and enable each other. An almost normal life and economy have been operating there for months now.

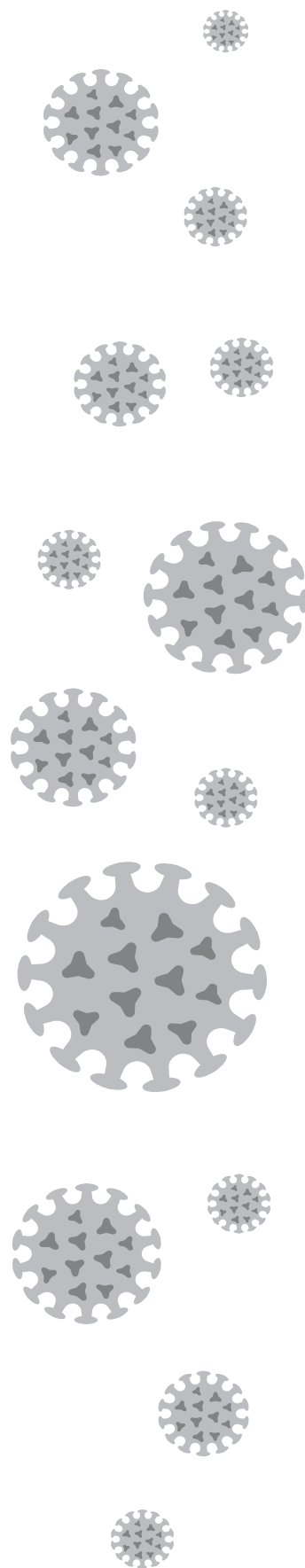
All these half measures do is ensure that in three weeks when we are continuing to see exponential growth of cases that more severe and longer lasting lockdowns will be inevitable.

The people who are inclined to exercise personal responsibility have been doing so since March. Those who don’t care about collective protection have been enabled by a do-nothing government that has failed its most basic of duties to care for the health and life of the population they were elected to represent.

My prediction is we will see case counts in the range of 2500-3000 cases per day by the time the three-week directive is up, at which point the government will be left with little choice but to cancel Christmas.

We are only beginning to see the crest of what is going to be an inundation of our province with the type of crisis it has never experienced before and that it will likely take a generation to recover from. Kenney’s inability to make a tough decision in the interest of what’s right will cost thousands of Albertans their lives, enrage his opponents to the right and left of him, and ultimately will be the start of the undoing of his political career. 

Robbie Kreger-Smith is a consultant for restaurants, communications, and marketing with previous partisan political experience in Alberta.



SOLIDARITY STYLE OFFICIAL CUPW 730 SHIRTS



To order: email union@cupwedm.net with your shipping address and size. Please note that the XS-L shirts are a more tight fit. The XL-XXL sizes fit as normal. All extra proceeds from a 'comrade' sale goes to our local Goods & Welfare Committee to help members facing sudden hardship.

REGULAR - \$30
COMRADE - \$40
SHIPPING - \$5





CUPW 730 EDMONTON & AFFILIATES
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
VIDEO CONFERENCE
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6TH, 2020
6:00-8:00 PM

**WATCH YOUR E-MAIL FOR INFO OR
CONTACT THE OFFICE TO REGISTER**

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4TH @12:00 NOON**

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