

# INSIDE OUT

...THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!!



THESE HEROES...  
THEY DON'T NEED CAPES,  
THEY DON'T NEED "THANKS"...

JUNE 2020  
[WWW.CUPW730.CA](http://WWW.CUPW730.CA)



...AND A

# CONTRACT!!



## INSIDEOUT

EMPOWER, ORGANIZE, RESIST

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 InsideOut committee is always interested in submissions of original articles, photographs, or illustrations, but submissions of general interest will be considered. We will also publish Letters to the Editor should you feel an issue requires further discussion. Prospective material must always concern CUPW or the labour movement.

To make a submission or get involved, contact the InsideOut Committee at [communications730@gmail.com](mailto:communications730@gmail.com).

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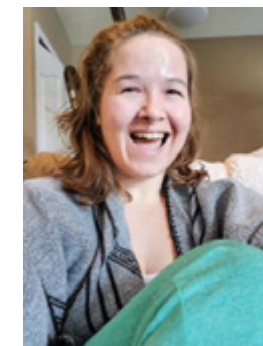


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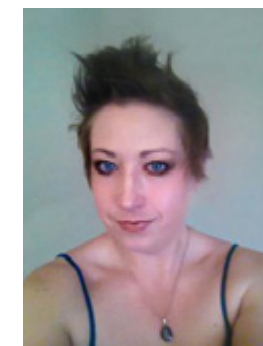
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# MAY DAY STATE OF THE UNION

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This past Friday (May 1st) marked what is known throughout most of the world as International Workers' Day, or May Day as we call it in Canada. May Day is not to be confused as an occasion merely appreciating workers for all that they do: the intent of May Day has always been a declaration by workers that society should be transformed to better redistribute wealth to those that create that wealth.

To be clear, May Day is our annual reminder that without our labour the world stands still: no wheel turns, no one is housed, no one is fed, and even the most powerful corporations and governments are paralyzed. Our task as a union at the forefront of the struggle for workers' empowerment has always been in raising the class consciousness of workers so that we may all understand our collective power and be willing to assert it.

This idea of workers understanding and asserting our collective power at the expense of governments and corporations may be an uncomfortable prospect for some. If anyone still has any doubts that there are two distinct classes with contradictory interests in our society, let us review our own experiences navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on their media statements, CPC has known since January 2020 that C19 was a serious problem and had supposedly instituted a pandemic plan. The truth is that Edmonton postal workers didn't see pandemic safety measures sufficiently

implemented until March 31st, after almost two weeks of collective push back from the work floors of Depot 2, EDDD, and Rosedale, plus mass threats of refusals of unsafe work.

Many can be excused for assuming that everyone, regardless of their class standing, would be pulling in the same direction during what will likely be the biggest public crisis of our generation. The facts, sadly, educate us otherwise. To this day, CPC has not properly implemented sanitation regimes and physical distancing measures, like staggered starts, in all of its facilities throughout the country. Unless pressured to do so, CPC is content with business as usual. In numerous media interviews, our Office made the case that unless CPC implements a standardized policy across the country, our facilities could become contagion points that undermine the broader containment strategy.

Perfect examples of this warning came to pass as outbreaks inflicted Amazon shipping warehouses throughout North America and the meat packing plants in southern Alberta. Cargill Meats and Amazon are among the largest corporations in the world that saw the pandemic as a business opportunity and were willing to sacrifice the health and lives of their workers for profits. The Amazon centre in Balzac, AB, now has five confirmed cases. As of last week, 921 out of 2000 Cargill workers out of High River, AB, are confirmed infected, with 12 hospitalized and 1 dead.

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*If anyone still has any doubts that there are two distinct classes with contradictory interests in our society, let us review our own experience navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.*

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Over 15% of all infection cases in Alberta stem directly from these corporations and the government wilfully ignoring the worker appeals that their conditions were not safe. Despite this, the Albertan government is backing Cargill to reopen the plant even though union safety recommendations have not been met.

In the coming weeks, you will hear business leaders and governments talk about the importance of 'reopening the economy'. This premature rush to get everything back to normal illustrates two essential points in raising our class consciousness: 1) Workers are wealth creators, not elites. An economy can't exist without the workers doing the actual labour. They need us, we don't need them; and 2) the powerful of this country will happily trade our health and lives in exchange for a chance to make money.

Some say that this virus does not discriminate. While technically true, it's not the rich and powerful that will be forced back into crowded workplaces to brave a likely second wave of outbreak. Although, theoretically, everyone can get infected, those hiding out in their second vacation home are drastically less likely to get sick than members of an immigrant family crammed together in a meat packing plant, logistics workers jostling in shipping warehouses, or the legions of underpaid retail and service workers forced to cater to non-essential consumer needs.

Much like in a war, the first casualties are never the people escalating the problem but the workers conscripted to be the fodder on the front lines.

If class consciousness is about internalizing these lessons to then develop strategies to fight back to improve our lives, some time should be given to detail what our union can better do to empower

our members moving forward. Today, we will be discussing the annual budget of our Local. Every year, this process is contentious because there are competing visions of what our Local should be investing in.

If the argument is that our Union is a bird that needs two strong wings in order to keep flying, what comprises these two wings? One wing is bureaucratic proceduralism: methods that rely on individual expertise and time such as grievances and route measurement. The other wing is grassroots organizing: methods that rely on the education and empowerment of our membership to collectively mobilize against the company. It's no coincidence that since our Local started deliberately investing more in organizing that more job actions are happening on our work floors, more members are coming to meetings, participating in educationals, and volunteering as Stewards, and other Locals are being inspired to do the same.

To give you the raw numbers, our Local only has the ability to move around 30% of your operating budget between different committees and initiatives. Of that 30%, 70% is historically committed to procedural methods (e.g., grievances, route measurement, and book-offs for other bureaucratic tasks). This year, the Executive is proposing to reduce procedural costs from 70% to 65% to allow for more organizing educationals as well as book-offs to have more





activists hold work floor meetings to keep our various facilities better updated and coordinated.

While the budget proposal endorsed by our Exec today is a small step in the right direction, this step, honestly speaking, is not nearly big enough if our goal is to properly prepare our membership to fight the inadequate arbitration being imposed on us as early as next month, or the inevitable back-to-work legislation waiting for us down the road. Have no illusions: individual proceduralism may help with the day-to-day running of our Union, but it can never be the means to collectively mobilize our members to meaningfully improve our lives and working conditions.

While I reluctantly support today's budget proposal, my hope is that another year of proving the efficacy of work floor organizing will convince those in our Local still prioritizing proceduralism over organizing that they need to better learn how to share our limited resources and that at least 50% of our resources should be put into educating and organizing our members to collectively mobilize.

Until both wings of our Union are of equal strength, we will not have the means to close the distance we need to in our flight.

Not only will we be navigating unfamiliar technology, but we must choose whether to fly currents long-neglected by our Union and the rest of the labour movement. Do we hide and pretend that the way we've been doing things for the past 40-years is working? Or do we internalize the class lessons of ongoing back-to-work legislation and the C19 pandemic to properly prepare our members to fight back?

Nothing moves and nothing is made without the willingness of the working class. Let's do our part in the struggle by embracing this reality. 📧

*By Roland Schmidt, CUPW Local 730 President.*

## FROM A DEPARTING EDITOR

*By Kyle Turner, no longer Editor*

Due to the changeover in Executive positions as put forward by the Executive Reformation Committee, the position of an editor doesn't really exist at the moment. Because there is an active InsideOut Committee, the creation of the InsideOut will be in their very capable hands.

I am proud that the members who joined the Committee saw this as a valuable use of their time, skills, and energy. I am especially proud, however, that I know the InsideOut won't stop just because I'm no longer the Editor. This is why having functioning committees and secondary leadership is so important: so that the work can and will continue once one person is gone. The opposite of this is gatekeeping and not only is that not helpful, I would say it also hurts our Union. We don't need people trying to recreate the wheel just because the previous Chair is gone. Pass the information and skills along to the Committee. Please.

Given our current situation, this issue is heavy on articles about health and safety, COVID-19, and class struggle. I think they are all pretty clear and explicit in the fact that we need to protect each other because the Corporation is never going to do it out of the kindness of its heart.

I would like to address one point raised by a member in the article "Using My Right to Refuse" (p. 9). Here, we find someone who was belittled because of their health and safety concerns. Instead of losing hope, they were able to gather their thoughts, come up with a plan, and approach management with supportive co-workers.

Despite this, management still tried to make this person feel bad by pinning on this person the ceasing of operations at the depot until an investigation was completed. This is what management does, which is why we need to empower each other. It is postal workers who are the ones who will be hurt, not management.

Be brave, be strong, and bring your friends and allies when you confront management. We are more effective as a group! 📧

## HERO BANNERS PROVIDE LITTLE COMFORT

*By Devon Rundvall, 1st Vice-President*

You might have noticed a new type of television commercial or billboard popping up around the city. It may have been placed there by a fast food chain, or possibly by the Provincial or Federal government. It typically has a picture of a nurse or a grocery store worker below some heartfelt text reading, "Thank you to our essential workers."

On first blush, these advertisements seem nice. Those nurses entered the field to help people. That fast food cook is just happy to still have a job. Some of these especially lucky workers have even received a pay increase during these trying times.

Truly touching.

The bosses that have approved these thank you messages are the same bosses paying minimum wage. Make no doubt that they would be paying less if the government didn't force them to pay "the minimum." What about those fortunate few who actually got the essential-worker pay bump, the grocery worker that received the extra two dollars to make sure they didn't walk away from their job that can now end with them dying alone in a hospital?

I had originally said that those wage bumps would end the moment the pandemic was over. But sadly, I was wrong. They didn't wait. The first wave of this disease isn't over and those in power are already clawing back the "hero pay".

The government has been hacking and slashing our education and healthcare system for decades. Our country would be in much better shape to face this pandemic if it wasn't for those cuts. And yet the Government of Alberta was bold enough to announce that they still plan on cutting the wages of our healthcare workers as soon as this mess is over.

These issues were bouncing around my head the week I walked up to my depot and saw a giant banner,



*Courtesy of Rankandfile.ca*

pinned up, that read: "Heroes work here. Thank you to all Canada Post employees!"

To start with, this is on the outside of the building. This tacky, self-congratulating banner isn't meant for us workers, but for the public. If the corporation truly cares about our well being, then why did we have to force them with the real threat of a work stoppage in order to get PPE?

Need I remind you that we have been in negotiations for three and a half years, without a contract for two and a half, and under arbitration for a year and a half. Throughout this entire process Canada Post has said "no" to every single thing we have asked for - every single thing!

We have staffing issues in the plant, constant bullying and harassment throughout our work floors, wage stagnation, unequal pay for the RSMCs, and an astronomical injury rate among letter carriers. And instead of dealing with any of these things... they put up a banner.

I don't want your praise. I want a raise.

I don't need a cape. I need a contract! 📧

# PANDEMIC OR SHE-DEMIC?

## A LOOK AT THE WAY COVID-19 HAS IMPACTED WOMEN

Typically when there is a shock to the economy, such as a financial crisis, dropping resource prices, or a natural disaster, the first industrial sectors to feel the shock are usually goods producing sectors or natural resources.

Here in Alberta, with dropping oil prices, oil and gas jobs have disappeared as companies leave the province or go bankrupt. Oil and gas jobs are primarily male-dominated. In Ontario when manufacturing jobs disappeared in 2008, for example, more than 70% of the unemployed were men.

The COVID-19-induced recession is markedly different. Between February and March, women accounted for 62% of the job losses across Canada. And where do women primarily work? Schools, childcare centres, hotels, restaurants, and shops: service sector jobs. These were the first places to close and maybe they will be the last to re-open, if they re-open at all. Front-line healthcare jobs are also female-dominated and also the ones involving the most human interaction.

To be able to return to work, families need childcare. Again, it's still women who provide the bulk of caregiving whether it's children or aging parents. Women are over half of the labour force in Canada, so it's vital to the economy that women are able to work.

Is this a new phenomenon? No. In 1918, during the Spanish Flu pandemic, women were the caregivers looking after the sick in hospitals and also at home. Unfortunately, women also helped to spread the pandemic because they became sick themselves and brought it home from the hospital. More recently with other pandemics, such as Ebola, the same pattern has played out.


Another disturbing trend in pandemics is the rise of domestic violence against women and children as women are forced to stay in abusive situations with few options to leave. Again, the Kenney government's cuts

also targeted women's shelters and programs that would assist women in recovering from abusive situations.

Even before C-19, women in Alberta were facing the disproportionate effects of the Kenney government's budget cuts, which targeted female-dominated work sectors in healthcare and other public services. With C-19, this has just been amplified even more. How are we going to recover?

The classic formula for post-recession recovery is to put government money into infrastructure projects and resource industries. This has worked in the past when men were more impacted. These programs are useful and necessary but unless there are specific resources put into women-dominated jobs sectors to help women to return to work and assert their hard fought for rights, then this pandemic runs the risk of setting both women and the gains they have made back decades.

This is why, more than ever, the need for universal and affordable childcare is necessary. Schools, early-learning education and support programs for families are essential, not frills to be cut. This pandemic has shown what work sectors and jobs are essential in keeping an economy running. These jobs are often the ones that are precarious and not unionized, with poor pay and poor working conditions.

There is tremendous opportunity to improve jobs and working conditions for women and all marginalized workers. However, certainly with our current government in Alberta, this will not happen without a fight. The "Economic Recovery Panel" set up by the government consists of 10 men and 2 women. One cannot expect bold, original thinking there. Unions and other labour allies have a great role and opportunity to make some real gains. The struggle continues. 

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*By Kathleen Mpulubusi, Women's Committee Chair.*

## USING MY RIGHT TO REFUSE ARTICLE 33.13 IN ACTION

*By Anonymous*

On April 8th, I, with a few other brothers and sisters, put into action a plan to use article 33.13 (Right to Refusal), in response to the lack of COVID-19 risk mitigation policies implemented at Rosedale. There were several motivations for this action.

After returning to work after a mandated 14 day self-isolation (I had developed cold symptoms in mid-March), it was never communicated to me by management that it was my own responsibility to sanitize the high-touch points in the step van I use; I became worried when I found this out from a fellow letter carrier, since I had already been using the step van for two days.

When I asked the superintendent why the trucks hadn't been sanitized (as we were told would be done a few weeks prior), or at least why it wasn't communicated to members that we were to sanitize them, I received no satisfactory answer. In fact, the superintendent seemed exasperated and annoyed with my questions.

Never before had I confronted management about anything. I walked away from my discussion with the superintendent, went outside, cried, and tried to take a few deep breaths and form a plan of action. I knew I had to be better prepared, and couldn't do it on my own if I was going to be successful in using my right to refuse. I finished my route that day and returned home to consider my options.


That evening, I made a list of the conditions I felt were unsafe due to the potential spread of COVID-19 in the depot: high touch points in the depot and washrooms not being sanitized regularly; congestion in the aisles due to wave 1a & 1b, members returning to their cases at the end of shift while wave 2b was still sorting; and lack of communication, adherence, and enforcement by team leaders and management to ensure 6 ft distancing rules were being followed by everyone in the depot.

I and a few other members set up a Zoom meeting to go over the steps we were going to take the following day. We decided that two of us would go to the manager's office and tell him a few of us wished to exercise our right to complain under 9.07 of the Collective Agreement. We asked him to follow us outside, in order to adhere to distancing measures, to formally exercise our right.

The manager met us outside along with the superintendent, and four other team leaders. Luckily I had fellow brothers and sisters to support me, and had the courage to follow through with our plan. I went through each aforementioned concern, asking "what can be done to correct the issue, and how long will it take to correct it?"

After the manager's standard reply of "the concern would be looked into," I suggested simple measures that could be easily implemented to remedy each of my concerns. From there I stated that I formally wished to use my right to refuse unsafe work under article 33.13 and would like an investigation done, since sanitation and congestion issues in the depot were not resolved. The manager stated, "you know you're responsible for shutting down the whole depot now?," to which I replied, "okay".

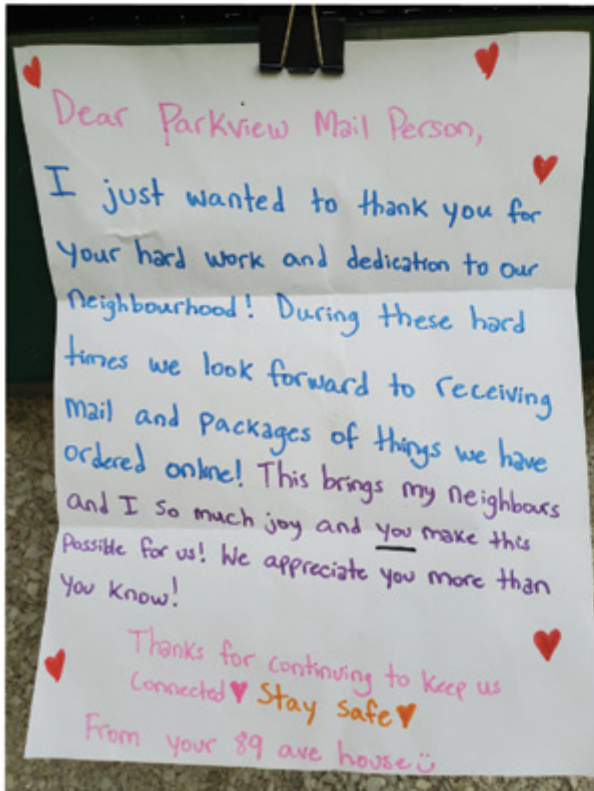
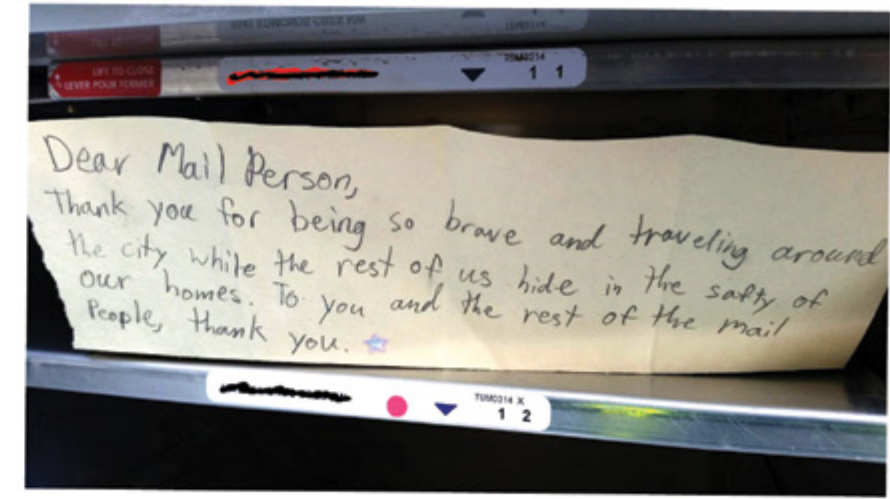
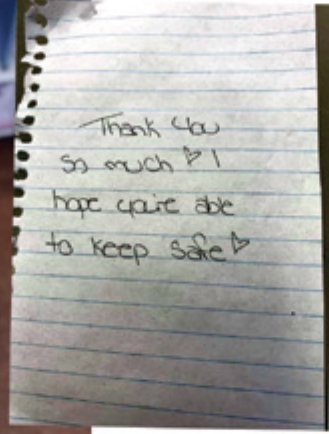
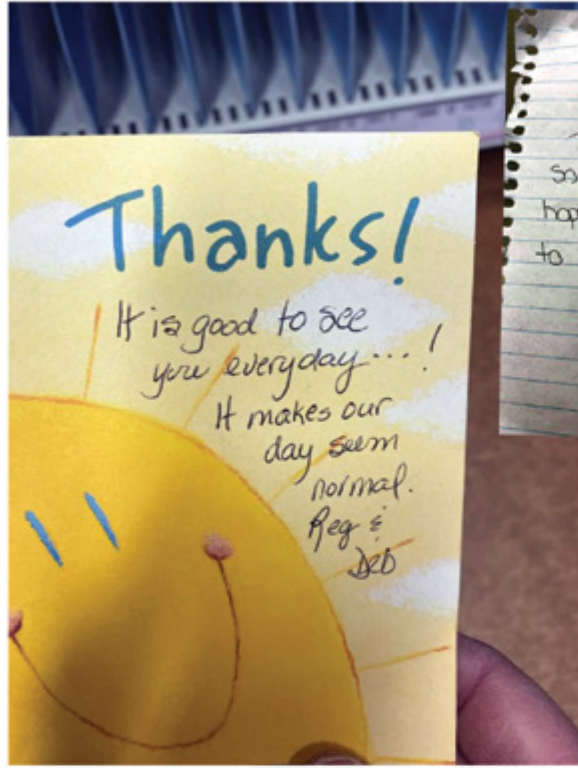
An LJOSH member, a shop steward, a fellow ally, the manager, the superintendent, and myself went back inside the depot to start the investigation. Suggestions to remedy the safety concerns were received by management and documented in an investigation report, which I signed. I went home, stating I would return when the safety protocols we agreed upon were implemented, which were done by the following day.

The whole process was extremely stress-inducing, but I was overwhelmed from the support I received from my brothers and sisters. I could not have exercised my right to refuse successfully without their guidance and support. I can appreciate that some of the measures implemented are inconvenient for some members. However, when the choice is between convenience, or our sisters, brothers, cousins, and their families staying healthy and alive, I will pick the latter every time. 



# THEY LIKE US!

A SELECTION OF MESSAGES OF THANKS AND SUPPORT RECEIVED BY POSTAL WORKERS ALL OVER EDMONTON





## BEAUTIFY OUR CITY WITH FRONT YARDS IN BLOOM!

By Kathleen Mpulubusi

The City of Edmonton, along with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Edmonton Horticultural Society have launched a new year of Front Yards in Bloom – a beloved tradition for gardeners, yard enthusiasts, and community members. Since 1999, we have celebrated citizens who work hard to make their space beautiful.

Even though we must stay physically distant from each other at this time, Front Yards in Bloom allows communities to come together and stay connected. This is a unique way for postal workers to acknowledge the beautiful yards and gardens in the neighbourhoods that we work in.

Even without a green thumb or a space to design, everyone can participate! Nominate a yard, public space, or balcony that you admire or that brightens your day. Nominees will receive a yard sign and a chance to be recognized in one of six categories as a household that promotes neighbourly connection and beautification.

Categories include General, Natural, Edible, Tiny Yards, Public Spaces, and Balconies in Bloom. The CUPW logo is prominently displayed on the sign, brochure, and other promotional material. This program is a wonderful way to positively promote our Union in the community.

To nominate a front yard, public space, or balcony, and for more information on the program, visit [frontyardsinbloom.ca](http://frontyardsinbloom.ca). Nominations are accepted from May 20th to June 30th. On the website, you can indicate if you are a postal worker. Last year, postal workers nominated over 1800 yards, representing over 1/3 of the total yards nominated.

Nomination forms will be distributed through the Local's email listserv and the mailout. You can print off the form, complete it, take a clear photo of it, and send it to [kmpulu@gmail.com](mailto:kmpulu@gmail.com) or drop it off at the Union office. You can also email me for a form and I will send it to you. 📧

## IT REALLY IS ALL ABOUT HEALTH AND SAFETY

By Anonymous

Years ago when management first started holding their weekly staff talks, I field a grievance against them. I argued that we don't have time values for this nor were we given the opportunity to express our collective concerns. Back then, management just talked at us. The arbitrator ruled that management had the right to inform us of concerns but, at the same time, we also had the right to raise our concerns.

But now things have changed by management holding row-by-row meetings. They justify this by stating that gathering together as a big group now, with COVID-19 looming, would be unsafe.

So while in our respective rows, we asked, "What would happen to the rest of us if one of tests positive?" Within three different rows by three different supervisors, we received three different answers: 1) we'll deal with that case by case when the situation arises; 2) I don't know, I'm new at this; and 3) we'll bring in Alberta Health Services and follow their recommendations.

By the end of it all, we were left scratching our heads, wondering, "What was that all about?"

Let me tell you what it is all about; it's about our health and safety. Is it too much to expect management to all be equally informed of our present situation and continually updating us while being totally upfront and honest with us? Is it too much for us to ask that the meetings are held outside, where we are all together (but spread apart) to hear the same answers to our many valid concerns?

It is time to hold management accountable. After all, it really is about our health and safety! 📧

## WE WERE NEVER IN THIS TOGETHER

### SEEING OUR PLACE IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Since COVID-19 entrenched itself as a global pandemic, we have been flooded with messages and hash tags about how we are all in this together. I get the sentiment, I really do, and a small part of me might even appreciate it.

In the most basic, literal sense, we are all in it together. We're all here and we'll all turn to dust here, on this rock that floats through space that we call Earth. Sure. That's fine.

But I would argue that not only are we not in this together, we were never in this together.

### Capitalists Versus Everyone Else

This argument is rooted in the idea of class. Not how we usually talk about it in terms of lower class, middle class, and upper class – though these ideas can surely play into it and add some level of nuance. What I am referring to here is the working class and the capitalist class.

I don't want to bog you down with political theory. Capitalist class refers to those individuals who own the tools of production and have the money to invest and purchase labour. Working class, on the other hand, refers to people who have to sell their labour for a wage in order to live and it is the labour of the workers that produces value.

'Working class' is lacking nuance, as it covers everyone whether or not they have a job. Maybe they are unable to work for physical or mental health reasons. Maybe their work is not broadly recognized as an actual job however unfair that is (such as being a stay-at-home parent or a sex worker).

There are other subgroups outside and in between these two broader groups. In our case, CPC management is somewhere in between. They are not labourers, but they don't own the tools or the buildings and it is not their money they are paying out.

Society tells us that taking these steps away from labour is an improvement. It is moving up, it is bettering yourself. It's a sign of merit: you're better than the rest, you've earned it! Congratulations. And so on, and so forth.

Whatever the case, management is not creating value. They benefit from our labour through bonuses and profits that are, in the end, our unpaid wages. This is an old trick that stems from paying us for our time and not what we produce.

### At Canada Post

This class struggle is all around us. We can see it when CPC refuses to negotiate a Collective Agreement. We can see it in a law that tells us we can no longer strike and withhold our labour, even though our labour is all we have.

We can clearly see that profits are unpaid wages with how CPC announced a quarterly loss when it finally had to pay RSMCs fairly. Of course, it wasn't a loss: it was money that was never theirs, just like the \$500k salary of the CEO and whatever salary the 22 Vice-Presidents make.

Now, it's quite possible you consider yourself to be a capitalist and that this is indeed the best system



and the best way to organize production. Until you own the resources and the tools, you're nothing more than a hopeful supporter and you're still being paid unfairly and stolen from.

When it was realized that COVID-19 was serious, management at Rosedale decided to pretend to take workers' concerns seriously. They started with carriers on Wave 2, which happens to be a more vocal group. Management went row-by-row and asked carriers what they thought could be done to make the workplace more safe.

This was all a farce, of course. There was already a list of demands from our Local office that management was dragging their feet on implementing. How much of a farce this was became clear once workers started making suggestions: deliver parcels and essential mail only, stop delivering flyers because it keeps us in the depot and on the street longer, and delay phone book delivery.

The response from management? No, no, no, and no. According to one supervisor, he didn't believe we could identify an essential piece of mail or a parcel that might contain medication. Flyers, he said, were low risk and we needed to maintain operations. At that point, the only thing that was agreed to, which was already suggested by the Local, was to stagger our start times.

Clearly, workers and management have a different understanding of safety, but the number of times we were told that we were in this together in the lead up to this was frustrating. Teary-eyed management telling me they could or would rather be working from home but they're choosing not to. These same people who then go back to their offices or their desks, which are now sectioned off with caution tape to maintain a distance that the workers can't even achieve with staggered start times.

But, sure, we're in this together.

Strangely, it was workers who had to tell management to stop having shared lunch meetings in the lunchroom. I'm also aware of one instance where a supervisor was blocking a pathway and a worker said something to



him about social distancing. His very mature response was to get in the worker's face and repeat, "6-feet."

### Keeping Up the Fight

At the beginning of the pandemic, it was hard to get people interested in or motivated to keep up the fight against CPC. There was lots to worry about and it seems like some people felt that, for this moment, maybe it would make sense if we worked together.

While this is understandable, it's also misguided because, as a class, they have not stopped their attack on us. We need look no farther than our fellow workers at Amazon or the Cargill meat plant to see that we are viewed as little more than numbers in a column to put more numbers in another column.

While we try to survive, those with power and capital view this as an opportunity to make more money. We might need to take a moment to regroup and learn how to fight during a pandemic, but just because our boss puts up banners calling us heroes, that doesn't mean there is a truce.

If an injury to one is an injury to all, then we've got some work to do. We've suffered some losses. Take a breath and regroup because, despite all the current uncertainty, we can at least be certain that the struggle continues. ✈️

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*By Kyle Turner, Rosedale letter carrier and Shop Steward.*

## HOW WE MOBILIZED FOR COVID-19

*By Healthy McSaferton*

The week that COVID-19 warnings started to permeate our awareness, fervent online conversations were happening around the clock among activists from most work floors in our Local. We all quickly agreed that the Corporation, despite knowing this pandemic was on its way since January, had no measures in place.

The only messaging we were receiving on the work floor was to "wash your hands." No plan was presented by management. That Edmonton facilities now have, albeit it to varying degrees, staggered start times, workstation cleaning supplies, regular cleaning of high-touch areas, vehicle cleaning supplies, and appropriate PPE, can be traced directly back to organizing done by members and orchestrated through the Local Executive.

Here's what we did. Through our activist network, we were able to find out who was self-isolating and mobilize those members through Zoom meetings. Each of those members were assigned a few facilities to monitor, and they quickly established a work floor contact on each wave and shift at the EMPP or a specific depot. Once this information chain was established, updates were sent daily, sometimes even hourly, from a cousin on the work floor to their at-home contact.

The at-home contact then entered the information for that worksite and corresponding shift/wave into a shared spreadsheet. As a result, within a matter of days our Local Executive was able to establish a clear picture of what was happening throughout the city and identify priorities.

An active brother on the frontlines explains,

"Through the education brought for by the Taking Back Our Workfloor course, our members were able to quickly question what our employer was doing to mitigate risk to employees. As no real answers were given, we reached out to our Local Health & Safety

Officer [Rashpal Sehmy] and President [Roland Schmidt] to guide us during these uncertain times. With a better understanding that we had to demand better prevention, our actions brought forth change and concern in the faces of management. As Rashpal and Roland worked by phone and email to create the needed changes, we are all thankful for their presence and how they stood up for us all during a historic world pandemic."

As our brother mentions, we were able to quickly mobilize and take action as a direct result of the work floor organizing classes that had been running in our Local since the middle of 2019. Each time a member takes this class, they connect with a network of active members throughout the city. Within this network, there are regular conversations about pressing issues and how we can organize to improve things now – not years from now as the grievance system functions. This is not to knock the grievance process, but it can't be our only way to advocate for ourselves, particularly in a situation as life-threatening as a pandemic.

The arrival of C-19 made it abundantly clear that our safety is in our own hands. If we were waiting for our supervisors to ensure our workplace safety, or waiting for a grievance regarding their inaction, what might the results have been? ✈️





# GRIEVANCE OFFICER NOMINEE

ELIZABETH TJOSTHEIM



## Why I'm Running for Grievance Officer

The struggle with the employer is real on all levels and I've been learning at every given opportunity. In addition to learning more about our collective agreements, I've also actively learned about the grievance and arbitration process, including helping with the backlog of RSMC grievances (some of which date back to the 2003 Collective Agreement). If I'm elected as Grievance Officer, I intend to make a positive difference using all the knowledge I've accumulated. My goal is to run an effective and efficient Grievance Office, be accessible to all members, mentor all those seeking to learn the grievance process, and support the Executive's ongoing organizing efforts in our Local.

## Endorsements

"Any of the candidates running would be capable in the Grievance Officer role, but Elizabeth is the candidate with the highest ceiling of potential and value for our Local – she's nowhere near retirement and she's not seeking positions outside our Local. A vote for Elizabeth is the best investment in the long-term future of our Local.

I worked alongside Elizabeth in Rosedale when she started as a Shop Steward and I witnessed firsthand her rapid growth as an advocate, activist, and leader. I've even had the pleasure of standing with her and other Rosedale RSMCs when they marched on management to successfully demand pay discrepancy reparations and a fair assignment selection process.

Elizabeth will excel as the Grievance Officer just as she's excelled in every other opportunity she's pursued in our Union. When voting for an Executive candidate, you're not just voting for how they will perform their specific role. You're also voting for what kind of voice they'll bring to the Executive team. Elizabeth will run an efficient and effective grievance department, but she also understands the limitations of the grievance system which is why she'll continue

My name is Elizabeth Tjostheim and I'm running for Local Grievance Officer, and I would appreciate your support. I've been an RSMC for 13-years and I currently serve as the Chief Shop Steward of RSMCs. I became a Shop Steward in 2016 to help make a difference on the work floor after seeing by co-workers struggle under the scrutiny of management.

I've also taken many courses and union educationals to strengthen my ability to serve our members. These include: Social Steward Level 1 & 2 (United Way Labour Community Advocate); Turtle Island (Prairie Regional School for Women); Advanced Shop Steward; Taking Back Our Work Floor (Facilitating); and Local Joint Health and Safety Training.

## My Service as Chief Shop Steward of RSMCs

When the Chief Shop Steward role came up for election last year, I put my name in to become an active part of the solution. Over the last year, together with fellow RSMC members, we've come up with an in-depth route measurement review process for RSMCs. I've also covered absences and helped in the Grievance Office over the last 10 months and attended first level grievance hearings regularly for the last 2 years. I've also helped with RSMC Advocate work (Pre-Arbitration). All of this has helped strengthen me as a Shop Steward and has increased my knowledge of the Urban and RSMC collective agreements.

bolstering the efforts of the current Executive to expand our work floor organizing strategy.

If you support the new action-oriented direction of this Local, Sister Elizabeth is the best choice to reinforce our trajectory as we continue our campaign to empower work floor activism in Edmonton and throughout the Prairie Region."

Roland Schmidt, Local 730 President.

"I've known Elizabeth for several years and I've watched her grow from a dedicated Shop Steward to a passionate, knowledgeable activist in our Local. She's been involved in grievance handling at many levels and showed her ability to argue a strong case with the employer with both Urban and RSMC collective agreements. She's worked diligently to ensure all members' rights are upheld.

Elizabeth has a strong drive, excellent organizational skills, dedication to supporting and building up others, and a passion for gaining and sharing knowledge. All of these skills will serve her well as our next Grievance Officer and I look forward to seeing our grievance office regain its stability and grow under her leadership."

Nancy Dodsworth, past Local 730 President (2017-2019).

"Elizabeth has demonstrated her ability to meet the administrative demands of this role as she's successfully covered leave and provided support in the grievance office. Elizabeth has demonstrated the desire to learn both collective agreements as she faithfully attended and participated in joint RSMC/Urban Shop Steward meetings and other Union educational opportunities.

Most notable is Elizabeth unyielding devotion to the membership. I've attended first level grievance hearings from 2017 until 2019 with Elizabeth where, from her very first hearing, I witnessed a transformation from a seemingly mild individual to an unwavering, principled defender of the member

complaint she was entrusted to represent. She immediately and continually earned my trust and respect. I'd endorse Elizabeth for any Union position she felt inclined to pursue, including her desire to serve as Local Grievance Officer."


Steven Cowtan, past Chief Shop Steward of Depots and Stations (2013-2019)

"I regret to inform the membership of the Edmonton Local that due to a family issue I must withdraw from the election for Grievance Officer of the Edmonton Local. I would like to ask those members that had planned or were considering to vote for me to place your vote and trust behind Sister Elizabeth Tjostheim.

Elizabeth has a care and concern for the membership of the Edmonton Local that will enable her to defend the membership. She is very well organized and eager to take on this new challenge. She has excellent knowledge of the RSMC Collective Agreement and would be able to share that knowledge with the other Full-Time Officers.

She has been working in the Local grievance office for some time and has gained great experience on how to do the job as well as learning the Urban Operations Collective Agreement. She has the strong support of many very experienced Sisters in the Local and we will be there to support her in any way possible."

Cathy Furtak, past Secretary-Treasurer (2012-2016)

Thank you for your support! 



# GRIEVANCE OFFICER NOMINEE

CARL HENTZELT



for more information when a grievance is filed to help with this. I try hard to return calls as soon as possible and take the time to answer questions.

## Grievance Experience

- Attended majority of first-level grievance hearings for first year and a half
- Dealt with grievances for all areas (LC, RSMC, Retail, Registration, EMPP, and Maintenance)
- Worked closely with all Chief Shop Stewards
- Directly helped save the jobs for several members facing termination
- Learned to audit paystubs for Urban WCB/STDP claims and missing pay
- Took the National Worker Advocate course and represented the Union in Arbitration several times – won \$30,000 for a member in my first case.

## Union Activities

- Have attended all GMMs and Executive meetings since elected, except once for union business.
- Chaired the Executive Reformation Committee and helped write the proposal that changed our Executive structure
- Assisted on many other By-Law change proposals
- Offered a workshop on how to write better grievances
- Successfully represented the Local in Article 8 charges for those who crossed the picket line of violated the overtime ban during the last strike
- Taught several others how to cover the Grievance Office
- Helped mentor several Chief Shop Stewards and Shop Stewards on first-level hearings and grievances
- Encouraged others to become activists
- Experience on the Route Measurement Committees
- Helped many members through 24 interviews.

## Meet the Candidate

- Works long hours and maintains a flexible schedule
- Helps mentor others and develop secondary leadership
- Friendly and patient
- Knowledgeable and experienced

## Why I am Running

I've spent the last two years learning and gaining experience as the Grievance Officer. It's been a fantastic experience and I'm still passionate about the job. I would like to continue so I can use that experience to serve and give back to the Local for the time invested in me to learn. One of the greatest experiences I've had in the Office is helping to save someone's job. I want to be able to do that again, as often as possible.

## What I Bring to the Office

I am very thorough and detail-oriented. This is especially important in grievances as the details frequently determine whether they succeed or fail. I routinely reach out to the member and Shop Steward

## Endorsements

"Carl has dedicated a great deal of time into the Grievance Office. I've seen firsthand how he has to file grievances, answer phone calls, meet with members, attend grievance hearings, and go to arbitration. This requires patience and acute attention to detail. Carl has demonstrated this in his time in the Grievance Office and will continue to serve the Local the same way he currently has. Carl also believes in secondary leadership and has mentored many members along the way. He often takes time out of his busy schedule to educate these members (including myself) on the grievance procedure. Bottom line is a vote for Carl is a vote for progress."

Cheryl Chow, Chief Shop Steward EMPP Shift 2.

"I have known Carl for most of his career with CPC. At Delton he was known for always questioning management and never just taking their word for procedures and process. He spent his own time doing research after getting direction and before disciplinary meetings, just to make sure he had his facts right and already always seemed to have an argument prepared to rebuttal against whatever management would come after him with. I have had the chance to work several times with him since he has been Grievance Officer and those traits have not been lost. He still continues to question management and never just take their word, his research is always done and he has always been there to lend assistance or advice whenever I have had the need to call on his expertise."

Jenn Reimer, Route Verification Officer.

"I am endorsing Carl for his second term in his position of Grievance Officer for the following reasons: knowledgeable; established in his office; supportive; feminist; LGBTQ+ ally; endless patience; willing to work late for unpaid hours; comfortable and safe presence; great at framing arguments for grievances; understands, through experience, the games/manipulations/loopholes CPC uses; actively trying to build secondary leadership; encouraging of co-workers to get involved and informed; put in

tons of work to organize the grievance office; and thorough and high attention to detail."

Kristine Bowman, 3rd Vice-President Collections.

"Carl is a great guy, he always takes the time to help me. When I don't know something, I ask him and he explains it to me. He is always available, even though I know he's busy. When I was new at being Chief Shop Steward, he took the time to explain the process and help me learn. He is very knowledgeable and will explain things so I can understand, even if it takes more time. As I was learning, he spoke on the grievances for me at first and did a good job at it. I trust him to know what's going on with the grievances. I recommend Carl for Grievance Officer."

Sanjay Malhotra, former Chief Shop Steward EMPP Shift 1. 🗳️





# NEW WEBSITE

## WWW.CUPW730.CA

Our local is only as strong as our members are informed, organized, and unified. For regular updates on how we're staying busy, please visit our new, member-created, website @ [www.cupw730.ca](http://www.cupw730.ca). On the site you'll also be able to find contact information for our local executive, an archive of our publications, digital copies of our collective agreements, constitution and bylaws, as well as links to various media featuring our local. If you're not already receiving our weekly e-newsletters, you can join via the 'SUBSCRIBE' button on the top-right part of the main page.



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