



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF CUPW 730 / JUNE 2021

INSIDE OUT

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

LOCAL 730 - EDMONTON & AFFILIATES - EST. 1965

WELCOMES

LEGEND

WELCOMES

LEGEND

REFLECTIONS FROM THE

REGIONAL CONVENTION

RIGHTS, FREEDOMS, AND

NAVIGATING THE PANDEMIC

CPC SAYS THE QUIET PART OUT LOUD



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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EMPOWER ORGANIZE RESIST

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY 2021

TRUST THE MEMBERSHIP

Comrades & friends,
As detailed in the latest local dispatch, Alberta is once again teetering on the brink of a full health system collapse and has the highest rate of infection in all of North America. I will not labour this point beyond reinforcing the importance of getting vaccinated as soon as possible, and asserting our safety protocols on our workfloors. If it hasn't been made clear enough already, CPC will not look after our well-being. If you need help exploring your leave options for childcare, or pushing CPC to uphold safety standards, our office is just a phone call or email away to support you.

Justice For Harassed Sisters

On a more heartening note, a few months back two brave sisters approached me with harassment complaints against an EMPP supervisor. A couple weeks ago, the CPC Director called to tell me the supervisor's behaviour was unacceptable and that they will longer be working for CPC. For legal reasons, I can't share specific details of the people involved but in the coming weeks I will be presenting a detailed analysis as to why most harassment complaints are ignored by CPC and why the approach we took this time was able to achieve justice in just a few months. Almost every facility has a

'bad apple' supervisor who is a bully or a creep. My hope is that by sharing why this latest series of complaints succeeded, we can inspire more members to echo this courage to come forward to help completely eliminate predatory behaviour from our workplaces.

Growing Communications

The virtual book club on Jean-Claude Parrot's "My Union, My Life" hosted by our local over 8 weeks was a resounding success. It culminated with JCP, the man, himself, jailed for defying back-to-work legislation in 1978, joining us as the guest of honour. For those unfamiliar with our history, CUPW has a reputation of being the progresisve vanguard of the labour movement in Canada that aggressively, and sometimes illegally, fought for causes well before they were established as cultural norms, such as equal employment rights for women and maternity leave. Sadly, not only our union, but the entire labour movement, has weakened considerably since JCP was our National President in the 1980s which is why exploring our history is so important.

The primary aim of this group was to provide an opportunity for the activists of our own local to further grow as working class leaders by understanding that our task is not to

reinvent the wheel but to get back to the methods that successfully and collectively empowered us. Our union is already as strong as we can be in the realm of proceduralism (i.e. grievances & arbitrations) but we've also atrophied in our abilities to actually organize our members to flex their collective power. Without a committed organizing strategy our working lives can never meaningfully improve.

An added benefit of the reading group was that we made solid connections with activists from locals all across the country. As mentioned previously, some of these connections have opened doors for us to have further discussions with members from the Toronto, Vancouver and Windsor locals who are interested in working with Edmonton to successfully bring an organizing-forward strategy to their locals once the pandemic lifts.

For those newer to union politics, this emphasis on reaching out to other locals may seem odd. Why not just focus on our own problems? The reality is that many of our problems exist because we are collectively weak. A single local will not be able to successfully fight CPC to stop SSD, bad restructures or mass staffing cuts; it will take trained, confident activists across many locals, all coordinating together, to fight back to make a difference. The struggle does not wait

to express itself at the bargaining table every four years, we face the struggle everyday of our working lives and should prepare ourselves to fight accordingly and directly.

Our ability to build these bridges with other activists would not have happened without the initiative of our local and especially the hard work of Sister Natasha Fryzuk and Brother Todd Vipond. They structured the readings, drafted incisiveness study questions and expertly navigated each session week after a week. A huge thank you to both of them and all the other local members who helped make this event such a grand success. The Communication and Organizing committees are already discussing similar future events to keep spreading the knowledge and making the most of needing to rely on a virtual setting. Until then, we have plenty of free copies of the book still available at the union office for any member looking to understand what this union can be and how we should fight to get there together. Please make an appointment to pick one up.

A Tale of Two Conferences

From April 26-29, all Prairie Region full time officers were trapped in the hell that is the Resolutions Committee to help prepare the resolutions for conference floor debate for April 30-May 2. This committee can play an important role to help better structure and organize delegate debate but over the years I have witnessed its role in our region and at the national level devolve into a gatekeeping society.

I feel the point of the committee is to try and package similar resolutions together, build composites or clarify language; we did this, but most of each 12 hour day was monopolized by a handful of members bogging down discussion with needless points of

order or trying to prevent a motion they didn't personally like from being debated as concurrence on the floor. To be clear, if a resolution has broken wording or is unconstitutional, it should not be brought forward for debate as concurrence but the resolution committee should have no right to block something they do not politically agree with from being debated by our full delegation on the conference floor.

Our four Edmonton officers made an alliance with Winnipeg and a couple other small locals to push back against this kind of obstruction on committee. I have no doubt that without our aggressive advocacy to "trust the members" to decide the issue for themselves on the conference floor, many of our local resolutions would have been cast into the non-concurrence bin all but guaranteeing they would not have made it to debate before we ran out of time. We were also able to push to prioritizing debate on 56 of the more ambitious resolutions submitted by all locals.

Leading By Example

The conference itself was a relatively painless affair, especially when compared to previous ones. Out of our 32 Edmonton delegates, 15 were brand new and it absolutely showed... in the best possible way. In my almost 20 years in this local I have never been part of a delegation that expressed such a strong degree of competence and solidarity. This conference was the first time where I saw a majority of our delegates (25 out of 32) regularly debated the issues as well as visibly support one another and coordinate with one another. No exaggeration, our delegation accounted for around 2/3 of all resolution debate. We were a united force, and everyone there took note.

It's embarrassing, but our local has long had a reputation, at both regional

and national events, for being unproductive and dysfunctional. In the past, our delegates did not typically get very involved in resolution debate but when they did it would often devolve into publicly arguing with one another on the floor over messy personal issues or policy our local was supposed to support. I'm relieved to say that this conference made it very clear to me that those days are behind us.

The non-stop stream of texts, emails and private zoom chats I received confirmed that other locals were happy with our new generation of activists as well. One sister from Calgary said: "I was so impressed and a bit jealous of your group this weekend. Your local is so informed, young and not afraid to speak passionately about their thoughts. Congratulations for presenting a well organized and well spoken group to represent our prairie region."

Negotiations 2021 Top Ten

As for the resolutions themselves, we passed around 160. Once we've formatted the full conference notes into something more palatable we'll be sure to share them on our website. For now, here are the top ten resolutions out of the 160 we passed that I feel will be our most important going into bargaining (in descending order):

- 10. No rollbacks:** It's time to end our nearly 40-year long losing streak. We built this company to what it is. Our compensation should reflect that.
- 9. New work classification for two-person lift:** We currently turn away product that is too big to properly process. By creating dedicated crews to handle large

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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product together we will create more jobs for depots, plants, and drivers to steal business away from other shipping companies.

8. **Restructure accountability:** Roughly half of all CUPW jobs are undermined by the route measurement system. If we are to receive justice for our time values, we need to be able to stop broken restructures before they are implemented.

7. **Menstruation & menopause Leave:** The cycle of birth is a gift to the world and we should honour those that may suffer from debilitating menstrual or menopausal ailments by giving them at least a day each month to be at home to recover. A modest ask that will overhaul our cultural expectations for the better.

6. **Increase to all health and dental benefits:** The compensation we receive for our benefits have not kept up with the increasing cost of living. It should.

5. **Eliminate the two-tier wage:** Harper unconstitutionally imposed this on us in arbitration after ordering us back-to-work in 2011. The two-tiers system shouldn't exist and should be completely dismantled. All employees should receive their full wage upon completing probation, and all those currently paid on the lower tier should be restored to the full wage.

4. **Wage increase & COL provisions:** Our wages have not even

remotely kept up with the cost of living (COL). Each year we should receive a 4% wage increase or something equal to the rising cost of living, whichever is greater.

3. **Merge the RSMCs into the Urban bargaining unit:** CPC has used lower RSMC compensation, benefits and work measurement methods as tools to leverage lower standards on Urban members. Until RSMCs are given full equality and protections for doing the exact same work as our Urban members, CPC will continue to divide & conquer.

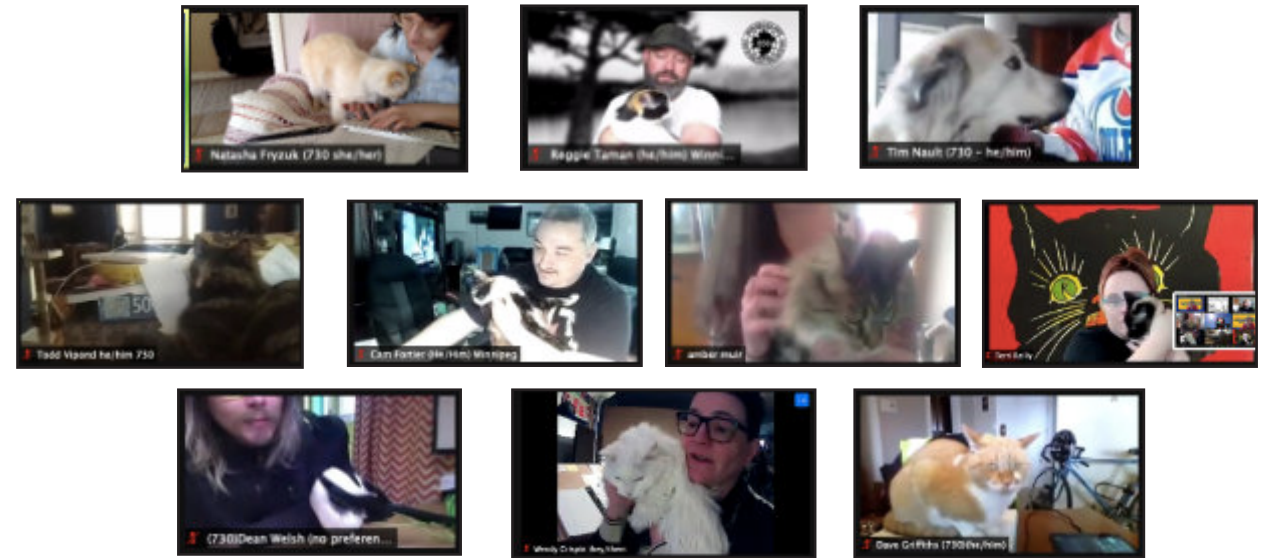
2. **Implementation of all Delivering Community Powers services:** Letter mail used to be our market advantage but is now depleting and never coming back. The same will happen to our parcel business as Amazon establishes its own fulfillment centers and delivery fleet. To survive, the future of the post office needs to use our infrastructure to connect Canada and be the first step in our transformation into a sustainable economy. Grocery delivery, wellness check-ins, broadband internet, and postal banking can be the new lucrative cornerstones of our public service if we fight to make it a reality.

1. **Postal banking as an unconditional demand:** Every one of our demands is something that we well deserve but will never exist unless we are prepared to fight. Out of all our demands, I argue that postal banking has the most serious implications for our future, both in the short and long term. Without it, we will not

be able to generate the revenue needed to subsidize our parcel business to compete with Amazon. If we lose our parcel share to Amazon, our business model dies. The public will not win postal banking for us, and the government and the corporation will not give it to us; more than any other demand, we will need to fight, and likely strike, to achieve postal banking. The return of postal banking is an issue we should refuse to compromise on. This demand makes postal banking a strategic negotiation priority and rally flag for our members.

When JCP spoke to our reading group he told us CUPW will only be as strong as our willingness to trust our membership. Our conference delegation represented the progressive and unapologetic commitment to do just that by bringing forward all the feedback we've been collecting from our deep dive into the 'Building Power to Win' surveys. We must trust our membership because that is where our strength lies. It does not matter what our negotiators or union officers believe we should fight for if our membership is not behind it. Conversely, if our members are sick and tired of losing, and seeing our jobs get worse, and want to challenge governmental tyranny, we should be doing everything in our power to facilitate that conversation and build that capacity. There can be no true victory without true struggle, and we badly need a win after decades of losing. Trust the membership.

In Solidarity,



There's a lot of work to do at Regional conference, but still a few moments for fellowship and fun. During a committee break, many delegates took the opportunity to share their Zoom-wise cats, dogs, and...magpies?

A STEP FORWARD: NON-BINARY CAUCUS A FIRST AT REGIONAL CONFERENCE

By Wendy Crispin (they/them),
Mayfield Depot

In response to the evolving needs of the membership, this year's Regional conference featured a Non-Binary Caucus for the first time, in addition to the Women's Caucus and Men's Equity Session.

Led by Edmonton's own Cole Rockarts, the session was a marvelously welcoming and safe space, highlighted by a presentation about the intersection of gender identity, colonization, and marginalization of indigeneous culture. This was followed with resources that can help union activists to do the work of better representation and inclusivity of its gender non-conforming (GNC) membership. The discussion and sharing therein was very helpful and appreciated by all present.

One can hardly speak of the success of this caucus, however, without placing it in contrast to the presentation that preceded it.

Since April is Mental Health Awareness Month, the convention received a guest speaker from the Canadian Mental Health Association, on the topic of "Mental Health and Wellness in the Workplace."

Barely three slides in, the blatant heteronormativity had some members cringing. As observed by another person present: "One of the first few slides went off about "mens" vs "women's" symptoms and likelihood of seeking help/etc. As a human who had recently become aware of being fluid (non-binary) I felt painfully and actively excluded. From such a large mental health body - for their presentation to not be inclusive cut deep." That sentiment was definitely shared among our comrades.

Continuing on, a large part of the advice offered skewed very neurotypical (Eat right! Exercise! Yoga! Work-Life Balance!), and also tends to put the burden on the afflicted person to "fix" themselves. Finally, there was an emphasis on "wellness strategies"

to keep you "doing your job and doing it well." It was, in many ways, more harm than help to some of us.

Clearly there is still work to be done in recognizing the role of the workplace in contributing to (or harming) our mental health, and also the employer's obligations to support members, not just the member's obligation to support themselves and "get back to work."

However, the recognition of broader identities, and the work that we as a union can do to improve the support of the rights and needs of more kinds of people, is a great beginning. This Non-binary caucus was a big step. I look forward to the work of improved inclusion of myself and my GNC comrades in our union community and ongoing struggle.

Again I thank Cole for the caucus, and huge gratitude to our own Communications Officer, Natasha Fryzuk, for the tremendous work she did in making it possible. 🏳️‍🌈

CUPW 730 HISTORY READING GROUP WELCOMES LEGENDARY UNION PRESIDENT AND ACTIVIST JEAN-CLAUDE PARROT

By Natasha Fryzuk (she/her),
Communications Officer, EDDD

"In CUPW we have always believed we can change things. And we have done so, both inside and outside our union. I trust that this book will help readers better understand why we believe that the fight of workers will never end, which is the reason for our slogan, 'The struggle continues.'"

- Jean-Claude Parrot

In April, our CUPW History Reading Group wrapped our two-month long study of CUPW legend Jean-Claude Parrot's "My Union, My Life," with an invaluable guest appearance from the author. I had the honour of co-hosting the event with local Shop Steward and Temp Committee Coordinator, Brother Todd Vipond.

Our eight-week deep dive into Brother Parrot's book was held over Zoom, enabling CUPW members from across Canada to participate in discussions about revitalizing both our union and the broader labour movement. In truth, there are members from across our country who are frustrated with the current state of both and are hungry for change. We had many challenging, sometimes emotional, discussions over the course of the reading group, but Brother Parrot's contribution offered us insight that crystalized a vision for moving forward: support and trust your membership!

Why We Say the Struggle Continues

From the outset, Brother Parrot made it very clear that many of the struggles we face now aren't fundamentally different from those members faced in his time. He emphasized that much of his success lay in always listening to

the membership first, then entering negotiations on their behalf, noting that if every local does that, your Regional Conference will be very active – by the end of that process you're going to have a very good programme to send to National Convention. You will be able to arrive there saying "hey, this is the way we're going to do it," because you know you have the support of the work floor.



Brother Parrot further emphasized that part of mobilizing people is showing your commitment to represent their true demands, stating, "when people say, 'the members are not ready,' I always say, 'what are you doing to make them ready?' You have to work on it."

My takeaway from Brother Parrot's point is that if we feel our union could be doing more, then it's up to us to do that work in our locals. We have less than a year before our next round of negotiations and the more we can all AEIOU (which stands for Agitate, Educate, Inoculate, Organize, and Unity, but it is also a verb in its own right at this point), the better prepared our membership will be to back up our demands with organized action.

Throughout our sessions it was clear that there are members across the country who care immensely and want to take action but are feeling isolated or helpless for one reason or another. Our study of "My Union, My Life," was as much a national solidarity action as it was a reading group: contacts were made, and bonds were forged. As our president Roland Schmidt asserted during the session: "Edmonton is very serious about working with any other local that wants to be involved in raising the profile of our union and doing that work of reaching out to our memberships."

My Union, My Life

Brother Parrot started work as a postal clerk when he was 17. He became an activist when he went to his first CPEA (Canadian Postal Employees Association) meeting and realized most of the complaints he had about his job were shared by many others. From there he continued as an activist during our 1965 wildcat strike, national chief negotiator during our 1974 two-week "illegal" strike, and national president from 1977 to 1992, during which time he was imprisoned for defying the government's back-to-work legislation.

One thing I will never forget is Brother Parrot telling me, Todd, and Roland in our post-session debrief that writing this book was his most valued accomplishment. It's clear that the book's title, "My Union, My Life," was in no way an exaggeration: a trait he doesn't seem possible of expressing. Throughout the book Brother Parrot provides details of the precise toll his tireless commitment to CUPW took on him and his personal life. In person, he is humble and matter of fact, and it's clear that from his early years through

to his recent retirement from his post as president of the National Organization of Retired Postal Workers, he works to do what is right, not what is easy. As his audience and CUPW members, many of us picked up on this.

Brother Vipond reflects, "I think the most memorable thing about the night for me was the way Brother Parrot was treated by the attendees. They thanked him for his decades-long service to the labour movement; like a labour legend who could do no wrong. The respect level was immense. Often times at an event where people are waiting to see one individual in a finale – it is just a let-down, but there was so much respect for Brother Parrot and the night surpassed everyone's expectations."

Trust the Membership

It's true: everyone who participated in our study of "My Union, My Life" was there because they believe, or at least have hope, that we can work together to improve our union and by extension the broader labour movement. During

our introductions to the finale, Brother Vipond pointed out that our current Collective Agreement is an historical document that has Brother Parrot's accomplishments, such as defying back-to-work legislation, throughout

Brother Parrot further emphasized that part of mobilizing people is showing your commitment to represent their true demands, stating, "when people say, 'the members are not ready,' I always say, 'what are you doing to make them ready?' You have to work on it."

and that the clauses we hold most dear came out of the era where he was at the helm. Todd went on to say, "let's learn our history, and let's hope that in the future, we can go on to add some

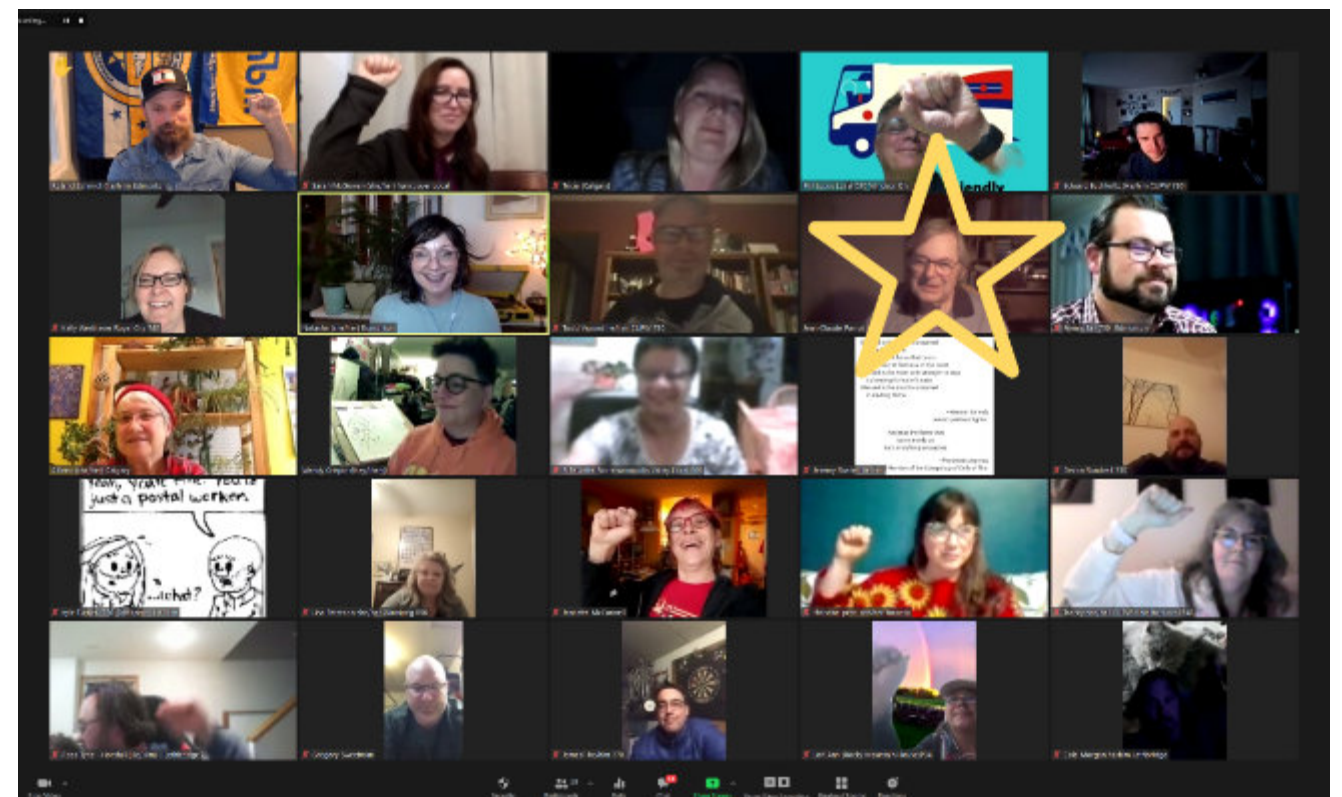
articles and clauses in here that push things forward."

One of the themes we kept returning to throughout our study was that we have generations of postal workers on our work floors, and that the more we can get together, share knowledge, and organize the stronger we are. Brother Parrot stands as an example to us all of how to not only do the work but to pass along the knowledge to empower all members willing to listen.

Reading this book was a transformative process for me as an active CUPW member, and I know I'm not alone. As Brother Roland states, "The final analysis is still the same: we must trust our membership and do everything we can to support them to fight back!"



Watch the recording of our session with Jean-Claude Parrot on our [YouTube channel: CUPW Local 730 - Edmonton & Affiliates](#)



ROUTE MEASUREMENT BY THE NUMBERS

By Jenn Reimer (she/her),
Route Measurement, Delton Depot

Even though volume counts have been put on hold for the remainder of the year for Urban Operations, that does not mean the work has stopped. The Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMCs) have been extremely busy with restructures both in affiliate offices and here in the city. Vegreville and Camrose went relatively smooth in comparison to the restructures that happened at both Rosedale and Mayfield.

Clawed-Back Time Values

The first issue that we are now seeing is CPC clawing back the time-values for the sortation of mail. This reduction of time is because RSMCs in the city limits are now receiving the majority of their mail pre-sorted and sequenced to their route, like the letter carriers. This has resulted in the loss of approximately 30-minutes per route.

Since there is still growth coming out of the Mayfield Depot, this sortation loss was absorbed by both the parcel and the points of call (POC) growth and so there was not a loss in routes. At Rosedale, however, the reduction in sortation time paired with the combination of several smaller routes and the lack of growth resulted in a loss of 3 routes for RSMCs. A formal objection has been made during

consultation about this by CUPW representatives Gwen Kroetsch and Jessica Wolters.

CPC Deflecting Blame on Flawed Parcel Assessment

We have also been using this time to revisit past unresolved issues, primarily regarding the devastating loss of approximately 3,000 minutes strictly in parcel delivery time after the 2018 Delton restructure. Because of pressure applied to CPC by our Local's route measurement team after the build, CPC agreed to do a parcel study and share the results with our union.

While we were grateful to have them come back in to take a second look, we were already skeptical about the potential results as their study was lined up to be done during one of the slowest months of the year. Nevertheless, we encouraged participation and conducted our own study.

When the data from this parcel study was shared with CUPW, there was a glaring issue that was immediately pointed out by our committee: the data collected in 2019 by CPC's Route Measurement Officer (RMO) was not singled out to only contain parcels. It was a combination of both parcels and

packets. This combination of data rendered their study completely pointless.

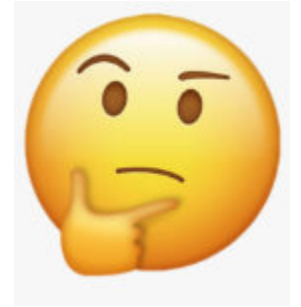
Next Steps

Thankfully, we had some carriers also wanting to participate in collecting the data CUPW was requesting. When we compiled this data, we discovered that, overall, most routes were under-assessed by approximately 5 parcels per day during the slow time of the year.

Considering the failed attempt at taking a second look at what happened with Delton, it's very clear that CPC has absolutely no interest in taking responsibility for the flawed assessment phase of the volume count. Nor do they have any problems in having the carriers be overburdened. The Committee is still not satisfied with the answers and results given by CPC.

We have requested a second follow-up meeting for further discussion and to attempt to rectify what went wrong at Delton in 2018. This meeting will take place on May 28th. 

JUST ONE MAN'S OPINION



As workers, we have fought and struggled for every benefit we have: from an 8 hour workday to parental leave and beyond. We create all value with our labour; what could we achieve if we collectively paused?

By Devon Rundvall (he/him),
1st VP Organizing

Recently, I read a Facebook comment from a postal worker that rubbed me the wrong way – I know, that's shocking. The subject of the comment wasn't even the part that bothered me, but there were a couple of lines that stuck out. It's something you'll hear every now and again and it bothers me every single time. It goes something like this: "I just appreciate having a pay cheque in these times, free quarantine money, help with childcare, and, most importantly, a job during COVID-19."

Despite the reference to the pandemic, the reality is that we hear similar things whenever workers are fighting for an increase or to even just protect their working conditions and benefits that were fought for and won in the past. We are inevitably met with comments like, "You should be happy to have a job in this economy," or, "I know someone willing to do this job for a lot less money."

I guarantee that as talks of negotiations, strikes, and lockouts ramp up, we will be seeing similar comments on social media. Unfortunately, you may hear similar comments from a co-worker on the work floor. How are we to respond to such a comment?

First, it starts by addressing how the

aforementioned Facebook user ended their comment: "Just one man's opinion." This simple salutation perfectly sums up the problem. We have been deliberately taught to focus solely on what we can achieve through our individual hard work and personal merit. The flaw with this is the belief that there is a social structure for us to climb and that if you have enough wealth and privilege, you are somehow better than others.

Of course, we live in a complex society that is designed to keep us subjugated. The system makes it almost impossible to climb out of the position that we are born into and at best one can only hope to become content with that position. After all, things could always be worse and those below you are always willing to take your place.

But do we not believe that all people are of equal value? If we do, then why do we value those above us more than those who find themselves below? Why don't we work towards a world where all are treated with the same dignity and respect?


I know that this is all you ever hear from me, but to overcome this we must organize collectively. Collective action is the labour movement and once we learn to frame these comments in that context, we find ourselves with drastically different answers.

The world comes screeching to a halt when the workers stop working. The entire system depends on workers, but it is not one individual worker. It is workers as a group. One worker can be replaced and therefore has limited power. But what about all the workers? That is a different story. It reminds me

of a quote from William "Big Bill" Haywood, one of the founding members and leaders of the Industrial Workers of the World: "If the workers are organized, all they have to do is put their hands in their pockets and they have got the capitalist class whipped."

It is no different for us. Our employer, and in turn our customers, should appreciate having a group of workers, nationwide, willing to work every day regardless of a global pandemic. As a union, we have incredible power. Not a single piece of mail, whether it is personal correspondence or a company's product, moves without postal workers making it happen. Think of the businesses that rely on us and how much money they make off our work.

So if you hear anyone say something along the lines of "free quarantine money" or "help with childcare," maybe gently remind them that not a single benefit we have in the Collective Agreement was proposed by the Corporation. In fact, the Corporation has resisted and fought against every single one.

This money doesn't come out of thin air. We create all value with our labour, whether it comes in the form of a day off, a pension, a uniform, or a pay cheque. Every penny that they spend on management bonuses is also created through the labour of a postal worker. It's about time they remember that. 



REFLECTIONS ON REGIONAL CONFERENCE:

One day you're earnestly working to help organize your work floor; the next you're spending over eight hours a day debating resolutions at Regional Conference! Regional is the place where Local representatives debate which resolutions should be passed on to National to inform contract negotiations. Is it as romantic as it sounds?

By Dave Griffiths (he/him), Organizer, EDDD

The Day Before

It's been raining all morning. At this time of year, the melt always bothers my throat. But this year it makes me wonder if I have COVID-19. I'm so sick of worrying about getting everyone sick. The rain is also soaking into the mail and turning the AMA and Costco magazines into moist masses of paper that fuse to the abundant newsprint flyers.

For months I have been excited to go to Regional Conference. To see how the sausage is made and watch our resolutions get ground down and mixed with the best ideas of other locals and repackaged in delicious bundles and sent off to National office.

This year, the Conference is over Zoom. It's hard not to be disappointed that we will not get to meet the other delegates in person.

Day 1

The big day is here. I eat. Do a workout: "Strong body, strong mind," I tell myself. I think about that scene in Dune where the guy has to stick his

hand in the scary box: "Fear is the mind-killer."

As the Conference starts, it's all mundane introductions of the Chair and the like. Then we get into the resolutions. Most resolutions pass with near-unanimous concurrence. I start to wonder if we are a rubber stamp Committee, but then it hits.

A delegate thinks that the current resolution should be combined with another resolution. The Committee explains why the two are separate. Using the arcane arts of procedural rules, the delegate sends the resolution back to the resolution Committee with directions to return immediately. This takes over an hour and the Committee comes back, saying that they made the same decision. Then, a few more resolutions. One that stands out is giving bereavement days to parents in the event of a stillbirth or miscarriage. Somehow this does not pass unanimously? There are monsters in this room.

Day 2

The next day starts off quick and we are right into the resolutions. A resolution to enforce an eight hour day on letter carriers comes up and as I read it I laugh. Who would support this? Who even brought it forward? Turns out a lot of people support it. A few speak in favour. Then a delegate tries to call the question. This would end debate and move straight to the vote. I'm starting to be weary of these magicians who wield arcane procedural arts and the power they grant. Calling the question fails and Devon, James, and I speak against the motion. The vote is close and I feel like for the first time I have done real work here protecting the wishes of people on my work floor.

At the end of the second day we are 60 resolutions behind the pace set out on day one. I'm told this is normal. Understanding that the resolutions are put up in an order that is determined by the elected Executives of each Local reminds me of the importance of organizing and voting in the right people – not just in Edmonton but all across the Prairie Region.

Day 3

The third day has resolutions going fast. I've started to understand the magic people used in the previous few days. You can silence your adversaries by calling the question or speaking twice. You stop time by sending a resolution back to Committee, but with misuse you risk the wrath of the Committee. You can manipulate the weight of your voice by putting one vote against everything but what you value most in the hopes of making your favourite resolutions unanimous ones, though I view this as very dark magic.

The pace of this event is erratic. We pass resolutions for pay increase for everyone, pay for night premium, pay for meal premium, pay for temps. I have no idea what we're talking about. I have 50 damn tabs open in this browser and I can't find anything. I vote yes. I have no clue what I just voted on. No time to dwell, they are reading the next resolution.

The Conference ends without fanfare. Roland tells us we accomplished more than normal and that he's proud of all of us. I know we did a lot but somehow it feels hollow to me. I close Zoom. Drink a beer far too quickly. I need some groceries for the week and the market closes soon. Census tomorrow so I better hurry up so I can get my rest. Don't forget potatoes. 🍌

PERSPECTIVES FROM TWO DELEGATES

By Kristine Lynn Bowman (she/they), VP of Garage, Maintenance, Registration, and Wickets

Despite the myriad warnings, I was excited to attend my first regional event!

I really enjoyed Brahm Enslin's Delivering Community Power presentation. It was filled with incredible ideas that intertwine environmental protection with business and service growth.

In the first chunk of resolutions, was a proposal for postal banking - to launch this to the top of our strike demands. It borderline physically hurt that people would speak against what is inevitably their job security. Everyone recognizes gig services like Amazon as a threat, and I fear underestimates it to a dangerous degree. It's going to take time for postal banking to be re-implemented; we cannot keep delaying this as a strike demand.

The level of support for temps was uplifting to witness. Many resolutions were proposed, two of which are notable to me. The first - eliminating the horrendous two tier wage system. The second that night workers leave be available to every employee. Even more rewarding, both these resolutions were supported unanimously. Temps have gotten shafted for over a decade now, and those who have lasted this long are now working hard to improve our working conditions for our most vulnerable comrades.

A TERRIFYING resolution on forcing carriers to work an 8 hour day (removing the ability to leave when your assigned work is done) was

proposed (I didn't catch where this originated). Debate was on fire! This is a ridiculous idea to impose on carriers - being able to leave when your work is done is the only good part of the job that remains. It was going grim - a series of supporters, followed by a quick "call the question" - which was defeated. Probably one of the most tense moments of the regional. Had we been physically gathered, the tension could have been cut with a knife. Following the defeat of calling the question, a number of Edmonton members wrought their opinion passionately and eloquently onto the delegation, swaying the attendees to vote down this ludicrous resolution.

Later on, we dealt with a union-affirming resolution that would see any member who switches to APOC (for any reason, for any length of time, at any time of the year) being stripped of their seniority. Debate was lit, though I was surprised people would stand so strongly opposed. This is a resolution that would give members serious reason to consider if betraying would be worth it. One of the reasons brought up was that going APOC was more money - and I disagree. Most carriers (with their flyers) who take overtime occasionally would earn on par if not above what a supervisor makes. Move to a position that offers a lot of overtime and you'll easily out-earn a supervisor.

A few more resolutions down the line and we ran into a proposal to get CUPW seats among the board of directors. James Ball gave what I consider the best speech of the day, ending with him damn near yelling "I DON'T WANT A SEAT, I WANT THE

WHOLE DAMN TABLE" - to which we promptly submitted a motion to our local to rename James Ball to James "the table" Ball.

Key to note, which we ended up discussing quite a bit once Devon mentioned it - our local was the only local who was referencing the National survey results to inform our debate points. I'm honestly left wondering if Edmonton is the only local that actually cares about connecting with our members and learning what their biggest wishes are to improve their work life.

Spread throughout the resolutions was an uncomfortable degree of gendered language, which myself and a couple others were on top of proposing friendly amendments to correct - which was always received as intended (with much relief).

All in all, the flavour of the conference was very "the procedure doesn't work, so let's try and make it better" as opposed to "we are all our union, let's make each other stronger and send CPC running for the hills". 🗳️

(Reports have been edited for brevity.)

Opinions are those of the respective authors and do not represent an official stance.

Per our bylaws, full reports from conference attendees are available for review and may be requested in writing from the Local Secretary Treasurer. - Ed.)

RIGHTS, FREEDOMS, AND NAVIGATING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

By Kathleen Mpulubusi, Human Rights & Women's Committee Chair, Delton

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced everyone to change their everyday lives in ways that were never before thought possible, from mask-wearing, to social distancing, to restrictions on who we can or cannot see or touch. We are questioning things we have all taken for granted in our democratic society with regard to our rights and freedoms.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation being spread about human rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and how they apply in our current pandemic situation. Therefore, I would like to present some basic information on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Human Rights Act so that people get an understanding of these very important pieces of legislation and how they impact our lives and current situation.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects basic rights and freedoms that are essential to keeping Canada free and democratic. It forms part of our Constitution which was enacted in 1982. Since then it has been an essential part of Canada's democracy and continues to shape our identity as a nation.

The Charter affirms that we are a multicultural country. It also protects the rights of Indigenous people in Canada (First Nations, Inuit and Metis). Section 35 of the Constitution, which is separate from the Charter, recognizes and affirms the treaty rights of Indigenous peoples.

There are 7 main categories of Rights and Freedoms that are covered in the Charter. These are:

1. **Fundamental Freedoms** - freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association (like unions);
2. **Democratic Rights** - to vote and participate in the democratic process;
3. **Equality Rights** - the right to not be discriminated against by the government;
4. **Official Languages Rights** - the use of both English and French before Parliament, in courts and other federal institutions;
5. **Minority Language Education Rights;**
6. **Mobility Rights** - the right to enter, stay in and leave Canada;
7. **Legal Rights** - the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty.

Limits on Rights

Section 1 of the Charter recognizes that rights are not absolute. This is the recognition that there is a balance between the rights of the individual and the interests of society and limits can be placed on individual rights and freedoms if this is necessary to achieve an important objective and if the limit is appropriate.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a public health emergency, and in the interests of society it is necessary to put limits on individual rights. Lockdowns, mask-wearing, closing/limiting of businesses and places of worship, and measured movement of people are considered to be justifiable limits in order to deal with the pandemic.

However, under the Charter, groups or individuals can challenge these limits:

take for example the conduct of the GraceLife Church and its pastor, or other anti-mask and restrictions groups. In previous public health emergencies, such as the SARS epidemic, the Supreme Court has upheld public health restrictions as appropriate limitations on individual rights. There is always a delicate balance between asserting one's individual rights and recognizing that in the assertion of those rights there is an impact on others that could cause harm.

The Charter guarantees many basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, it is not a complete document and there are more human rights that have to be protected. This is why there is other legislation that goes even further to protect our Human Rights and predates the Charter. The Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) was first passed in 1977 and has been updated frequently as our understanding of human rights – and who needs recognition and protection – has increased. In addition, there are also provincial and territorial human rights acts.

Human Rights & The Canadian Human Rights Act

Human rights describe how we expect to be treated as persons and try to ensure that everyone has equality, dignity, respect and a life free from discrimination. Article 1 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” In Canada, your human rights are protected by federal, provincial,



territorial, and international laws. At Canada Post, as a federally regulated company, we follow the CHRA.

The CHRA identifies 13 Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination. Discrimination is an action or decision that results in the unfair or negative treatment of a person or a group based on one of these: race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic characteristics, family status, pardoned conviction, disability.

What is Harassment?

Harassment is the action of discrimination. Legally, harassment occurs when someone: offends or humiliates you verbally or physically, threatens or intimidates you, makes unwelcome comments or jokes about one of the prohibited grounds, or makes unnecessary physical contact with you.

Employers are responsible for any harassment in the workplace and they


must take appropriate action against any employee who harasses others. In the Urban Collective Agreement, Article 5 (Discrimination) and Article 56 (Harassment) outline the employer and employees obligations.

Accommodation

Under the CHRA, the duty to accommodate is a major component. Employers have a duty to accommodate when an employee needs a change or modification, based on one of the grounds of discrimination. Article 54 of the Urban Collective Agreement outlines procedures and obligations required when an employee is injured or disabled and needs accommodation. The duty to accommodate pregnant workers is outlined in Article 33. Canada Post also has to provide accommodation in recognition of religious practices, like providing a prayer room in facilities.

Human rights concerns have certainly flared up and been exposed during the

pandemic. There has been a rise in anti-Asian and anti-Islamic hate and discrimination, and in racist incidents against BIPOC individuals. The Black Lives Matter movement has also highlighted and fostered conversations and awareness of systemic discrimination among individuals and institutions. Learning about and being aware of your rights and the rights of others is an ongoing endeavour which should be everyone's responsibility.

We need to develop empathy and respect for our fellow humans and focus on what brings us together, not what sets us apart. 

Links to learn more:

The Canadian Human Rights Commission: <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca>

The Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms: <https://www.justice.gc.ca>

CPC SAYS THE QUIET PART OUT LOUD

SPECIAL LEAVE THE REASON FOR FINANCIAL LOSSES

By Kyle Turner (he/him),
Rosedale Depot

CPC loves to report a loss. Recently, CPC reported a \$779-million loss; a five-fold increase from 2019 despite the increase in parcel volumes over this period, according to an article from CP24. Among the reasons for these losses are the usual decline in lettermail, as well as what has been described as COVID-related costs that amount to \$292-million.

What are these COVID-related costs? This comes from special leave for high-risk employees, employees required to stay home to take care of children and elders, as well as increased overtime and the impact of higher parcel volumes.

This is where CPC always says the quiet part out loud: taking care of employees – employees whose labour is the source of all revenue – is causing them to lose money.

They did it when they had to pay Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers for what was essentially stolen wages. They're doing it now when they blame the special/quarantine leave that we negotiated as part of our Collective Agreement. Surely our arbitrated raises and back pay are also contributing to this "loss."

The position of CEO of Canada Post comes with a salary of around \$500,000 plus bonuses. There are also twenty-two Vice-Presidents. All of

these people get paid whether or not the Corporation reports a loss. It's a Herculean task to try to find a report of how much money CPC made, so it's hard to know if these are actual losses or losses that are a result of simply not making as much profit as they projected.

In a 2019 BNN Bloomberg article, CPC reported it would struggle to make a profit in coming years because of the decline in lettermail and increasing "employee costs." Employee costs is not expanded on, but pay equity for RSMCs and having the most injured workforce in the federal sector surely fall under that category.

Something that frequently gets lost in the discussion is that CPC provides a public service and is under no obligation to return profits – profits that are, as it has been shown time and time again, really the stolen wages of the workers.

Thanks, CPC, it's always good to know exactly where we stand: we are the burden, even though without us there would be nothing.

It is important to keep in mind that our union has offered CPC solutions to all of these problems, from improving our health and safety to implementing postal banking to increase revenue. But we know that we will just be legislated back to work when we try to negotiate these solutions.

We can't keep letting CPC blame us and drag us down, but we will not achieve anything without a fight.



Link to articles:

<https://www.cp24.com/mobile/news/canada-post-losses-increase-fivefold-in-2020-due-to-covid-despite-increased-parcels-1.5410109>

<https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/canada-post-forecasts-continuing-sector-losses-despite-booming-parcel-deliveries-1.1245446>



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

June 21st is National Indigenous Peoples Day, which was created to recognize and celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. June 21st, the Summer solstice, was chosen because for generations many Indigenous peoples celebrated on or around this day due to it being the day with the most sunlight.

Despite this official recognition, Canada still has ongoing issues with anti-Indigenous violence. In 2017, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (as well as 2SLGBTQIA people) released its final report. This two volume report (plus an additional report for Quebec) contains 231 calls for justice directed at governments, institutions, social service providers, industries, and all Canadians. You can find that report here (<http://mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report>).

For tips on how to be better allies to Indigenous peoples, check out the IndigiNews article "Beyond Red Dress Day: Seven calls to action for allies." Some of these calls to action include sharing the MMIWG+ report, taking responsibility for white supremacy (which has a list of books, podcasts, and other materials), and the importance of showing solidarity – not trying to be a savior. You can find that article here (<https://indiginews.com/vancouver-island/beyond-red-dress-day-seven-calls-to-action-for-allies>).

If you are interested in learning more about Indigenous world-views, current issues, and national and local Indigenous-settler relations, the University of Alberta offers a free course from the Faculty of Native Studies. This course is called Indigenous Canada and you can register here (<https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html>).



ON THE COVER

PRIDE MONTH AND THE "PROGRESS FLAG"

Front cover: The Struggle Continues; not just for labour, but for many disenfranchised groups around the world. Pride Month focuses on the spectrum of GRSMs (gender, romantic, and sexual minorities) and their ongoing quest for acceptance, equality, and respect for their human rights.

Back cover: The original Pride flag—the six-band rainbow designed by Gilbert Baker in 1978—is known and familiar worldwide. Now, many groups are adopting an updated version. Designed by Daniel Quasar in 2018, the new flag features the addition of chevrons in black and brown to represent people of colour, and baby blue, pink, and white to include the trans flag into its design. Dubbed the "Progress Flag" by some, it reflects an awareness among the LGBTQ+ community of the need for greater inclusivity among its own ranks. The activism of LGBTQ+ people of colour, and trans people of colour in particular, inspired the very first Pride events; tragically, this same group is still the disproportional target of discrimination, violence, and murder to this day.



Kyle Turner, 2021



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