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**INSIDEOUT**  
**NOVEMBER 2019**



# INSIDEOUT

## EMPOWER // ORGANIZE // RESIST

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

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

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

Kyle Turner, Editor  
editor@cupwedm.net

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# DEFIANCE REFERENDUM UPDATE

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Brothers, Sisters, Cousins, and Comrades of the Edmonton Local,

At the September GMM, we had one of the largest turnouts in the 15-years I've been with this local. Having 116 members attend a GMM is something worth celebrating because it shows that an organization is healthy: it means elections and policy proposals are less likely to go unchallenged and it means that members are realizing just how important their involvement is in determining the direction of our union.

The October 6th GMM was another tremendous test of our fledgling movement as we debated whether or not to further invest in the very work floor organizing and outreach strategy that is responsible for the momentum we are witnessing. Many members spoke passionately about how the courses have given their work floors confidence to stand up to Canada Post. The motion as carried almost unanimously by the 75 members present, and the next batch of courses should be running by the time you read this.

Word of our local's revitalisation is spreading throughout the rest of our union. Our National Vice-President in charge of education, Dave Bleakney, told me that he wants to circulate a series of national bulletins promoting the organizer training program we've launched, which would also highlight all the resulting job action. Our Regional Education Office, Dave Lambert, will be visiting me on October 22nd to finalize a proposal to roll out our workshops to the rest of the Prairie region.

On October 9th, I had a conference call with members of the Toronto executive who are excited to replicate exactly what we are doing here. Similar arrangements are coming together with the Royal City and Vancouver locals and I hope to be talking with them before mid-October. Postal workers throughout Canada are hungry for change and the efforts of all the activists in our local are resonating as an answer.

Of course, every step we take towards empowering our members is met with pushback from Canada Post. Our campaign against the fraudulent restructure system at Depot 2 culminated with a willingness to resist systemic overburdening and short-staffing across the entire local. The only thing stopping letter carriers from going the distance to cancel the restructure was the threat of back-to-work legislation fines hanging over any work stoppage.

Even then, there was a willingness to fight – as long as we had the adequate support to do so. With that, I was tasked with conducting a referendum throughout the local, asking members their thoughts on the legislation. At the October 6th GMM, I shared the results of that referendum in the form of an open letter. On October 10th, I sent this letter to our National Office and our labour allies in Canada.

What follows is the introductory remarks as well as the open letter to the National Executive Board in its entirety.

### **Introductory Remarks on the Defiance Referendum**

Dear National Executive Board members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers,

Please find attached an open letter that I've shared with our local, other CUPW members, and allies via bulletins, email banks, and social media. In it, I detail a referendum campaign where I was tasked with asking our local if we'd be willing to defy Trudeau's back-to-work legislation in order to improve our working conditions.

I feel this initiative, and its results, are important to share with you because we need our leadership to understand just how cynical our members feel about the current arbitration process and the inaction of our union in response to being legislated back. Everyone understands the enormity of the fines and the risk of fighting the government; what is equally

understood by our members in Edmonton is that not even a decent arbitrated contract will justify having our rights violated and that unless we take a stand, this process will keep repeating itself and the quality of our job will keep eroding.

At our National Convention, there was no shortage of enthusiasm when discussing the prospect of defiance. The delegation there even unanimously adopted an 'Action Plan' committed to "building capacity for all types of actions to counter interference in negotiations." Our National Constitution is also very clear on the question of restrictive legislation: "The Union strongly and publicly rejects repressive legislation, injunctions, injustices, the various forms of inequities and abuse negating the fundamental rights of the working class and supports, through union struggle, every union effort to oppose any repressive labour legislation."

The belief in Edmonton is that this legislation can be beaten but that we will need a guarantee of support if we are to be at the forefront of this struggle.

What I am formally and respectfully asking the Board today is to arrange a conference call with me between October 21st and 25th, 2019, to discuss the following:

- 1) Edmonton's back-to-work defiance referendum
- 2) Launching a nation-wide back-to-work defiance referendum, and its merits
- 3) The success of Edmonton's education-organizing program and expanding it to other regions and locals
- 4) Soliciting support from allies in the rest of the labour movement to defy back-to-work legislation

The struggle continues, but how we fare in it will be determined by our willingness to organize and fight back. I look forward to hearing back from you as well as welcome the prospect of what we can do together to help empower our members and revitalize the labour movement.

## OPEN LETTER

### SOLIDARITY APPEAL

To our friends on the CUPW National Executive and in the rest of the labour movement,

There can be no denying that the size and power of our movement has been in steady decline for at least the past 40-years. Some of this has been attributed to changes in industry, but if we're being honest with ourselves it has more to do with our unwillingness to strategically counter the aggression and ruthlessness of employers and government.

Everywhere in Canada, workers are under attack, whether it's General Motors violating its own plant non-closure commitments, Ford's massive cuts to education in Ontario, or Kenney's attempts to break collectively bargained contracts in Alberta. The powers that be will break any rule to further their agenda knowing that we won't do anything to meaningfully challenge them.

Our union was reminded just how powerless we've become when we were legislated back to work this past December for the 5th time since 1985, despite the Supreme Court ruling in 2017 that Harper's similar 2011 legislation was unconstitutional. The message is clear: workers in Canada have rights until those rights become inconvenient to the powerful. Now, our members are asking uncomfortable questions like: why do we even go on strike if we just end up getting legislated back and what's the point of even being a part of a union if it won't fight when we need it most?

In fairness, we've never received a straight answer to these questions, only rumours that the previous National Executive (of which many of you were a part) didn't want to risk going against the legislation because "members weren't willing to fight."

Also, in fairness, how do we know how the members feel without actually asking them?

In Edmonton, we took these concerns to heart and held 25 work floor meetings between September 4th and October 3rd, 2019, to ask our members a very simple question: if you knew you had the financial and legal support of our National Executive, support from others in the labour movement, and the mass majority support of our own local, would you then be willing to defy back-to-work legislation in order to improve your working conditions?

Of the 939 members attending these work floor meetings, 83% (787) of them voted 'Yes.'

This question was not asked lightly and it was made clear that there was no wrong answer. It is no small thing to challenge the law and doing so is only possible if enough people have lost faith in the ability of the system to treat them fairly.

In the mid-1900s, unions in Canada traded the possibility to strike at will for the procedural rights of the collective bargaining and grievance systems; what has come to pass are employers deliberately violating our Collective Agreements and governments legislating against our ability to bargain.

In doing so, the ruling class broke the social contract for labour peace and declared open war on the workers of this country. We, in the labour movement, have not yet adjusted to this reality and are still the only players committed to the rules of a game where everyone else is cheating and winning – at our expense and with impunity.

The postal workers in Edmonton are not inherently more radical than postal workers anywhere else. The only difference between us and our comrades throughout Canada is that Edmonton postal workers were actually asked what we were willing to fight for and to what extent we were willing to go.

I will be inviting other CUPW locals to join Edmonton in initiating their own defiance referendums and encourage our National Executive to support all remaining locals to join along – let the membership decide!

Within the next couple of weeks, I also look forward to discussing with the whole National Executive what you are willing to do to support our members in Edmonton now that we've clearly voiced our willingness to fight. Edmonton expects you to be behind us and awaits your response with great enthusiasm.

Last December, other unions offered their solidarity if we were willing to defy the legislation because they know that back-to-work legislation is not only an attack on postal workers but on all workers, and they look to us to lead the way.

This kind of draconian government interference will not stop until a union some day, somewhere, draws a line in the sand. No matter what happens in our arbitration, back-to-work legislation inevitably waits for us the next time we dare to assert our right to collective bargaining.

Edmonton has spoken: let us be the spark, let us be the tip of the spear! If Edmonton alone fought this legislation, the legislation could never hold – nevermind if we had the support of other locals, our entire union, or the rest of the Canadian labour movement behind us.

If we stand together, we will break this unjust law and usher in a new era for the labour movement in Canada.

An injury to one is an injury to all! The struggle continues! 🇨🇦



*By Roland Schmidt, Local 730 President.*

# REFERENDUM VOTE TOTALS

The following two pages contain the dates, locations, shifts, waves, and tallies of the votes received during the back-to-work legislation defiance referendum. In total, 939 votes were cast

Date	Location	Wave/Shift	Yes	No	Spoil	Total
09.04.19	Rosedale	Total	91	16	0	107
		1	52	8	0	60
		2	39	8	0	47
09.05.19	Delton	Total	66	21	4	107
		1	39	16	3	60
		2	27	5	1	47
09.06.19	Depot 2	Total	69	16	1	107
		1	41	13	0	54
		2	28	3	1	32
09.10.19	WMS	Total	84	6	0	90
		1	69	4	0	73
		2	15	2	0	17
09.11.19	Mayfield	Total	68	4	0	72
		1	47	3	0	50
		2	21	1	0	22
09.11.19	Garage	Total	6	0	0	6
09.12.19	EMPP	Total	76	9	0	85
		1	42	2	0	44
		2	34	7	0	41

Date	Location	Wave/Shift	Yes	No	Spoil	Total
09.12.19	Maint.	Total	9	0	0	9
09.13.19	EDDD	Total	65	15	1	81
		1	35	12	0	47
		2	30	3	1	34
09.17.19	St. Albert	Total	42	3	1	46
		1	35	1	1	37
		2	7	2	0	9
09.18.19	Sh. Park	Total	29	7	0	36
		1	23	5	0	28
		2	6	2	0	8
09.19.19	Nisku	Total	27	2	1	30
09.20.19	Camrose	Total	17	1	0	18
09.24.19	Spruce Gr.	Total	37	7	1	45
09.25.19	Barrhead	Total	6	0	0	6
09.26.19	Morinville	Total	8	1	0	9
09.27.19	Vegreville	Total	6	0	0	6
10.01.19	Wetaskiwin	Total	14	6	0	20
10.02.19	Westlock	Total	9	1	0	10
10.03.19	Ft. Sask.	Total	17	5	0	22



# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A CODE AND CONDUCT

*By Rashpal Sehmy, Health and Safety Officer.*

Many years ago when I began my career at Canada Post, it didn't take that much convincing from other Shop Stewards who were active in the depots and the former Edmonton Lettermail Processing Plant for me to take the Shop Steward course. After seeing injustices taking place and people being treated poorly by management, there was no question in my mind as to why it was necessary to become active and to help defend our members.

The years since I was hired in 1999 as a Christmas casual – for my charming personality and good looks – seem to fly by, but our co-workers are still subject to the same harsh and ill-mannered treatment as they were back then.

The Collective Agreements that saw individuals endure long strikes and even being placed in jail for defending our rights are a part of Canadian history. As the workers of our union helped with the creation of Shop Stewards, these individuals are the link between those suffering from injustice on the work floor and their local union offices.

The issues never seemed to end – grievances, 2-4 notices, and an ongoing harsh reality of speak up or shut up. Choosing to speak up is what suited me best. There was a bond created with other Shop Stewards and activists and we continually supported each other and our fellow co-workers. We learned how to fill out grievances, to hand over all notes taken at 2-4 meetings to the local office, and to attend Shop Steward meetings to learn how to best defend members.

There was strength in our collective actions and our abilities to question the wrongdoing that was happening in our workplaces. Those of us who became Shop Stewards took the Oath of Office that can be found in our National Constitution.


There is honour in defending the rights of working class people. There is equally a responsibility

which we as postal workers must continually protect those rights which we and others have fought hard for. Even if we have not all taken the Oath of Office, we owe it to all of our members to listen to their concerns and move forward as a collective on issues that will make a positive change in our workplaces.

Creating a Code of Conduct for Shop Stewards simply gives guidance to all and serves as a reminder of what our intent is when we take on such roles. The same goes for members of the Local Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (LJOHSC). The goal of this is to solidify that, as representatives of our Union, our focus must be on how we can best service our members.

Just as Shop Stewards use the Collective Agreement, the same should hold true for LJOHSC members. How often do we become aware that, for example, a simple thing like the investigation of an incident takes place without a Union member of LJOHSC present? How many times do our members who get hurt on the job get told by management to use the Short-Term Disability Plan when this should be recorded as an Injury on Duty?

Is there no correlation between between the increase in parcel volumes and the increase in injuries? These are things that create the relationship among Shop Stewards and our LJOHSC activists. This is what we need to realize that a collective effort by all of us is what is needed to help take back the work floor and uphold our dignity as members of the working class.

At the October GMM, the Code of Conduct for Shop Stewards was passed with great enthusiasm by all and especially the newly appointed Shop Stewards, who felt the new Code of Conduct gave an excellent guide to their new roles and responsibilities. This was supported by our local Executive, as is the creation of a Code of Conduct for LJOHSC members. The purpose of this is to make sure that our members serving on the committee remain focused on defending and representing our members in the best way possible. 

# FROM THE EDITOR

## A FOREWORD

In this issue, there are two main driving points. First, we are pushing forward with our plan for work floor organizing. Second, we are continuing to acknowledge what our lived experience tells us: no matter what Canada Post says and how many health and safety committees they create, they don't really care about our health and safety beyond how it might impact their bottom line.

I would like to focus on a story that was submitted by a member from the EMPP. This story is an example that takes place where the two previous points intersect. It is about a work floor action that took place in an attempt to address chronic under-staffing. This is just one example of a number of actions that have taken place over the last several months since we started pushing and encouraging action on the floor.

This kind of thing takes a lot of energy and courage. Management also has a way of making a person feel like they were wrong for speaking up. But there is also a bit of a learning curve, so with my small amount of experience and training, I would like to offer five tips for engaging in work floor action based on the incident that follows.

My first suggestion is that it is important to keep your cool. This is very difficult, especially after weeks or months, or perhaps even years, of management avoiding questions or not giving answers. There are two reasons for this. First, having an appearance of being respectful can help you get more of your co-workers on side. You're not going to win over everyone, of course, and while there is surely a time and place to be a loose cannon, you have to know your audience and at this point, you probably don't really.

Second, remaining calm gives management fewer reasons to come after you. I've heard of situations where a raised voice and swearing has led to emergency suspensions. This can certainly deflate a person and make people more hesitant to be involved.

If you can, let it be management who gets flustered and makes a mistake. We saw this at Rosedale when management was marched on for the second time in under 24-hours. If you can catch those slip-ups and redirect them, it will help you out.

In the incident shared below, there are a couple of occasions where the author loses track of who is saying what and describes it as 'unproductive arguing'. Management also tries to blame a worker for causing anxiety in another worker. While this is shown to have been a lie, it is best to not give management the opportunity to pull this kind of trick.

My third suggestion is to stick together. The workers in the EMPP who took part in this confrontation did an excellent job of this, with one member saying to management that the workers were in it together – if one was to be disciplined for voicing concerns, they would all have to be disciplined. This is excellent because one person can be easily suspended, and the worker who initiated the confrontation with management thought this was going to be the outcome for him.

But what happens when you have to discipline, suspend, or fire 5 people? 10? 15? The whole shift? I would never say that there wouldn't be a day where management sets out to prove a point and dismisses everyone. On a normal day, however, dealing with the logistics of so many suspensions wouldn't be worth it. Management already doesn't staff our jobs properly, so adding a long list of suspensions would surely be a logistical nightmare.

My fourth suggestion is to have a plan. The first time I tried to take part in a work floor action, I spent too much time planning and it wasn't useful planning. Too much time passed and the opportunity kind of fell apart. The second time, the action was more sudden but also more successful. A plan formed quickly out of a parking lot meeting. Taking time to plan gives you time to come up with a demand


and provide management a timeline to address it. This will let you know what there is to say so that the situation doesn't turn into a yelling match.

Certain situations do require quicker responses, however. This is where the importance of having a quick work floor or parking lot meeting comes in to see if enough people are on the same page. You don't need everyone, but don't go alone. Successful actions build confidence and will bring more people on board. These meetings will also provide an opportunity to discuss how to escalate your action if management ignores your deadline. How far are people willing to go? If you find out, don't start at the end. Dial it up to that point.

My fifth and final suggestion builds off the previous suggestion, and that is to not worry about reaching everyone. If everyone on your shift or at your depot is on board, that is wonderful. Some won't be and that is fine – maybe they will see the value in what you're doing and eventually join in, maybe they won't.

There are other people who will actively try to hurt what you're doing. This story from the EMPP features one such person, and this kind of person has always been around. In 1912, Ernest Riebe began making cartoons about such a character. Riebe called him Mr. Block because these people block us from achieving our goals. Mr. Block is someone who "licks the hand that smites him and kisses the boot that kicks him." [1]

While I am always hopeful that people can change, it is helpful to identify the people who will sabotage what you're doing so that you can exclude them. If they demonstrate that they've changed, then that is another story. It's also always possible that you've been wrong about a person, so keep that in mind.

All right, that is all I have to say. If you have any other stories of work floor actions, we would love to share them in order to give others inspiration and ideas for how to do the same. 

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

[1] For more information, check <https://libcom.org/gallery/mr-block-comic>

# INCIDENT AT EMPP

## WORK FLOOR ACTION REPORT

*By Gary O'Neill*

Today after lunch, Shift 2 Parcels had a special visit from the superintendent. It started with a presentation about cracking down on Plant rule violations. This devolved into a shouting match about vacant positions going unfilled.

The superintendent started, "I came here to talk about Plant rules. But you don't need to hear what they are from me: you already know what they are. We've given out countless warnings and now I'm here to tell you that we're going to start enforcing them. From now on, I'm going to be handing out two-four notices instead of warnings whenever I see a violation."

A co-worker spoke up, "What about the vacant positions causing overburdening and injuries?" The superintendent responded, "I don't understand. We're talking about Plant rules."

The co-worker continued, "Vacant positions! The Plant rules are for health and safety, so on the same topic we want to know why you insist on understaffing, which causes injuries."

The superintendent responded: "We talked about this last week, and we talked about this the week before. I don't see what the point—" The co-worker interjected, "You didn't address the issues last week or the week before. We want to know what you're going to do about it!"

The superintendent began to reply, "Why are you so angry? You're yelling at me and I'm just here trying to..." but he was once again interrupted. The co-worker continued, "I'm yelling because I'm trying to be heard and because you said you didn't understand, and you're not understanding the question! We want to..."

This time the superintendent interrupted, "This is not the place to discuss this. You're more than welcome..."

*(Continued on next page.)*

*(Continued from previous page.)*

Another co-worker, acting as an interrupter as outlined in our Taking Back the Work Floor training, chimed in: “My co-worker is trying to communicate a concern we all share and you are refusing to hear him. Let him speak!”

The first co-worker began, “For months we’ve been running the runouts without MDPs and have suffered inadequate help in non-con and the trailers. This is the place to discuss what you keep putting off. You admitted last week that you are in charge of scheduling. We’re all here. You’re here. So how about an answer?”

At this point, we were all talking over each other. The situation escalated and it is a bit of a blur, but it becomes clear again with the superintendent speaking: “I can’t schedule for the sick and absent. The Collective Agreement forbids it. Maybe if you weren’t sick as much...”

I finally responded, “The sicks wouldn’t be such a problem if we had full staffing! What do you plan to do about...” I was briefly cut-off by a co-worker who told me not to get involved, but I ignored them and carried on: “The sicks are inevitable and it’s your responsibility to be prepared for it. Don’t blame the sicks!”

Another co-worker approached me to express concern that this was all happening without a Shop Steward present. I said that I wasn’t concerned as we are capable of representing ourselves. My co-worker then went away, presumably to find a Steward, and a few minutes of unproductive arguing ensued.

The superintendent was not relenting, “There is nothing more to be said. The meeting is over and it’s time for you all to get back to work. Everybody go to your stations. I’ll get you a Shop Steward and we’ll talk privately about this.” He then turned to me, “Are you representing your co-worker?”

The crowd began to disperse. The co-worker who initiated the confrontation can be heard talking to his neighbours, “The superintendent is probably going to discipline me and try to get me fired.”

I spoke up, “No. We will not negotiate with you on a one-on-one basis. We stand together.”

“Ok then,” the superintendent said as he began to focus elsewhere. The co-worker who expressed concern about the lack of a Shop Steward then spoke up, “Are you going to discipline our co-worker for what he said? What he said goes for all of us.”

A supervisor then said, “No, what? We would never...”

My co-worker continued, “He’s exercising his right to complain about unsafe working conditions. He should not be intimidated.” At this point, there are general murmurs of agreement from the broader group.

A management-friendly co-worker then approached the superintendent. They speak to each other quietly. A Shop Steward arrives and the superintendent tells everyone to go back to their stations while they discuss this privately. The group then reluctantly disperses as it seems nothing more is happening.

It is reported that the superintendent claims that some staff members may have experienced anxiety due to the co-worker’s forceful expression.

Another co-worker reported to me later that the superintendent approached her and apologized if she was offended or experienced anxiety due to the behaviour during the meeting. She said she denied feeling anxious or that our co-worker was even at fault, and she pressed the superintendent to be honest and explain why he refuses to fully staff the section. The superintendent went away disappointed.

My co-worker is left wondering why the superintendent would have believed that she specifically might be anxious.

After giving it some thought, she came to believe that this message must have been relayed by the management-friendly co-worker who briefly spoke with the superintendent – a worker who has shared anti-union views in the past and is frequently seen engaging in small talk with management. 🗨️

# MR. BLOCK

HE DON'T FAVOR SABOTAGE



# LESSONS FROM THE QR2 CONSULTATION

## DISAPPEARING TIME VALUES AT WHITEMUD SOUTH

As of October 11th, Canada Post had yet to inform employees about the results of the Whitemud South volume count, nor had they informed them about the build set to start on October 16th or the implementation goal of March 16th, 2020. Furthermore, the Corporation hadn't even told their own staffing supervisor about the three CUPW representatives to be booked-off to participate in the build process.

Despite agitation on the floor, recent builds and their disastrous results (Depot 2 and Delton), morale being at an all-time low, increased use of EAP (leading to a doubling of our mental health benefits), and the hypocritical campaign of "Make it Safe, Make it Home," the outcome of the Whitemud South count is CPC looking to trim down a community mailbox (CMB) depot.

How? Parcel volumes are up, as CPC advertises continued profits and patterns of growth. There are no shortcuts to take en route, and while the number of boxes you put mail into may vary, carriers are still delivering to 100% of their CMB sites. Add in flyers and CPC's ability to spray addresses (incomplete, I might point out) onto what basically amounts to flyers, cutting positions literally makes zero sense.

That being said, CPC is still shaving down on our percentage of coverage. Depot 4 has lost 9% and Depot 8 is down almost 10%. These small percentages total a reduction in variable pacing to the tune of 335-minutes on the 4 side and 200-minutes on the 8 side. Right there they are cutting just over one full-time walk with just the difference in variable pacing alone.

Our restructure team (Warren, Jenn, Kathleen, and Peter) expressed much frustration and disappointment. Essentially, CPC is looking at the current routes and they have figured out how to "adjust" time values and pacing to be able to eliminate current over-assessments, bringing the new walks to under 480-minutes – 470 on the 8 side, so they can

now add to the routes if needed – there will be no reason for over-assessment or overtime.

At this stage in the process, they've only taken the new structure values and superimposed them on the existing routes, so there's no consideration for changes in drive times accounted for, scheduled or unscheduled customer pickups and drive times, and nothing noted for the LRT going live and its impact on routes. (Our team did strongly suggest that CPC do everything in their power to keep routes on either side of the LRT so carriers don't have to cross it multiple times, especially if the city messes up the signal changes like they did at the NAIT station.)

Kathleen has pointed out a severe flaw in the restructure system: they only use the data for the year previous to the build. This does not give an accurate representation of growth, as even 10% per year would equal 50% of growth in this case, not the measly 12% that CPC is using. Data should be compiled restructure to restructure in order to get an accurate representation of both increases and decreases across all products – and we'd love for them to include flyers.

We also brought up many health and safety concerns. Overburdening is becoming more of an issue in how it is increasing the length of time that carriers are being forced to work. Cramming more and more into our days creates a lot of stress and mental health issues as more and more carriers struggle to maintain some semblance of work-life balance. Any hope of balance goes out the window if a carrier is new to a walk or if the carrier is ensuring that they are working a safe manner.

Despite Whitemud South being a CMB depot with each route requiring its own case because the route spreads across both sides of the case strips, CPC is insistent on a 50/50 split between wave 1 and wave 2 sharing cases. Our team questioned what CPC feels they need the extra space from consolidating routes


and cases for, but we did not receive a response. This inspired us to bring up the safety concerns of delivery in the dark for wave 2, especially in Winter months. There was a muttered response about headlamps, but nothing further.

There is overwhelming evidence that CPC is failing us in this coming build: continuing to cut positions, making our work days longer and more challenging, not considering flyers in weight and volumes, refusing to work around the requirement of wave 2, launching into the build without their pilot heat map being complete, using only one out of several years' worth of data on business growth.

This is business as usual for CPC. They do what they want, when they want, as long as it saves them money or increases their bonuses. CPC doesn't actually care about us or our safety. You have to look no further

than the blue 'values' posters in each facility. Where do they list employees among their 'values'?

It's gotten to the point where middle management (superintendents, managers) are agitated because by now they understand what awaits on the other side of this build. One member of management who was scheduled to attend this consultation was so frustrated that they refused to participate.

It's crucial to hold our positions on health and safety and just workloads. It's crucial to continue building solidarity, educating ourselves, and developing layers of leadership. We will need this to resist CPC's unfair goals – and this is why the struggle continues. 

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

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## BY THE NUMBERS

### ROUTE MEASUREMENT UPDATE

*By Jenn Reimer, Router Verification Officer.*

Another volume count has now come and gone and the results are now in from September's chaos at Whitemud South. During our time there, we were able to compare volumes from the previous volume count in 2015 and the results were both expected and shocking.

What we expected to see was the normal drop in mail volumes. Depot 4 saw a 31% drop and depot 8 saw a 33% decline. While these numbers are down, they won't have the same negative impact to the percentage of coverage that we would typically see in a depot that is still primarily door-to-door.

What was shocking was the huge increase in both the parcels and packets, primarily in terms of barcode fits and barcode no fits. Depot 4 had 3,079 parcels in 2015 and 4,493 in 2019. That's a 45.9% increase. Depot 8 had 1,689 parcels in 2015 and 2,480 in 2019. This is a 46.8% increase.


Surely with the majority of routes currently being over-assessed and the increase in parcels, in particular those that have to be attempted at the door, we would see an increase in routes? Based on the quality review meeting between

route measurement, route optimization, and management, this vision was not shared.

According to the reports shared with CUPW, Whitemud South has only been given credit for parcel growth in the past year that amounts to a meager 13.8% increase at depot 8 and an even worse increase of 1% at depot 4. When we asked what happened to the increase in parcels between 2015 and 2019, the response was not surprising at all: "We'll look into it and get back to you." Now that the build is already underway, this response does nothing to address our concerns.

What does this mean for the letter carriers going forward at Whitemud South? Essentially, once the drop in mail volumes is applied, the inside preparation and sortation time will decrease and all current walks will now lose their over-assessment pay.

But, wait! Let's factor in the 1% parcel increase at depot 4 and give each walk back a minute of time, and let's apply the 14% increase back to depot 8 and give each of those walks 9.32 minutes to deal with their increased parcel volumes.

What does this give us? The same number of routes with the current amount of overburdening and now only 8-hours structured time to do it. 

# EDUCATION REPORT

## TAKING BACK THE WORK FLOOR

By Devon Rundvall, Education Officer

“I started working at Canada Post in the 80s. Back then, management was scared of us. They aren’t anymore, but we need to get back to that.”

These words were shared by an incredible sister at the beginning of a Taking Back the Work Floor class. This statement perfectly sums up why I decided to become more involved in the local and become the Education Officer.

Most of the members weren’t around back in the 80s. Heck, a lot weren’t even alive back then. The 80s were a tumultuous time at the post office. Our predecessors fought long and hard and, more importantly, they won. To this day, other unions thank postal workers for those victories.

But let’s be honest with ourselves. That was thirty years ago and a lot has changed. In my opinion, the biggest change has been that us posties have lost our fight. I was pained to hear stories from every group about management going too far: there were temporary letter carriers being told to work for free; RSMCs having log sheets destroyed; supervisors in the EMPP demanding members do the work of two or three people; yelling, intimidation, manipulation, and harassment of all types – including sexual assault.

In every class, we would have to cut these stories short due to the sheer volume of stories and time constraints.

So what has been our approach? Typically, it’s been to file a grievance and hope for something to change, but I’ve also heard that people have been told, “That’s the way it is around here. Just put your head down and try not to be noticed.”

Some of the worst stories were of members, some of whom were supposed to be Shop Stewards, getting special treatment or making secret deals with management. This has been slowly eroding the power that we have as a union and it has to stop.

But I’m not here to point fingers. I’m here to give

hope. The changes that we want to see on the work floor can and will happen. The only way we are going to see effective, lasting change is if the work floor learns to organize. We have tried waiting for our problems to be resolved at a grievance hearing or in contract negotiations, but it’s not working.


No one from the National Office is coming to save us. We aren’t going to find the right manager to hear our complaints and take pity on us. Our strength lies in a work floor that is willing and ready to stand together. In the last 200-years of labour history, nothing has been freely given to workers. Every dime and every benefit has been fought for by a united work floor.

It’s for this reason that our local has decided to shift its focus back to empowering the workers. During the one day Taking Back the Work Floor courses, we give simple tools and strategies that every worker can use to shift the power balance on the floor. The strategies we give aren’t about organizing behind a local president or a bulletin from National. It’s about the things that matter to you and your co-workers.

Since we have run multiple courses from all groups in the local, we have been hearing stories of attendees taking what they have learned and applying to their workplaces. A few examples: RSMCs at a depot have confronted management regarding a bully supervisor; letter carriers have demanded that compressed flyers be extended to full, three-day delivery; and workers in the EMPP have pushed back to get single sweepers.

All of these issues were addressed not by an individual but by the floor acting together. All of these issues had been complained about for months or years, but they weren’t fixed until postal workers decided to stand together.

In the coming months, we’re going to be running more of these classes in our local, and, we hope, across the region and country. The plan is to remind postal workers all across the country who holds power on the floor. Keep an eye out on the union boards for applications for upcoming classes.

If you have any questions about this course or any other courses, feel free to email me at [730education@gmail.com](mailto:730education@gmail.com). 



# CUPW LOCAL 730 - EDMONTON & AFFILIATES



## TAKING BACK THE WORKFLOOR - ONE DAY UNION EDUCATIONAL

<b>Event:</b> Taking Back the Workfloor - Workshop	<b>Collection &amp; Delivery:</b> Wed, Nov 13, 2019 (8am - 4pm)
<b>Address:</b> CUPW 730 Office - 18121 107ave, EDM	<b>EMPP, Maintenance &amp; Fleet:</b> Fri, Nov 15, 2019 (8am - 4pm)
<b>Application Deadline:</b> Tue, Nov 5, 2019, 4pm	<b>RSMC:</b> Thr, Nov 14, 2019 (8am - 4pm)

You've tried reasoning with management, submitting formal complaints, asking stewards for help, calling the union office, or even filing grievances but none have addressed problems with bully supervisors, unsafe conditions, or your rights being violated. As individual workers we're easy to ignore, but if we learn to exercise our power collectively the solutions to our problems are only as far as our willingness to go. This workshop is an opportunity to learn basic skills to rally workforce support to successfully confront management and demand change.

**Please print clearly!** An email with all the below requested info, or a picture of a filled out application, can be sent to: [730education@gmail.com](mailto:730education@gmail.com) Applications may also be mailed: 18121 107ave, Edmonton, AB, T5S 1K4, or faxed: (780) 423-2883. If accepted, you will be contacted.

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Gender Identity:</b>	<b>Equity Seeking Group? (Y/N):</b>
<b>Job Classification:</b>	<b>Shift/Wave:</b>
<b>Work Location:</b>	<b>Section:</b>
<b>Home Address:</b>	
<b>City:</b>	<b>Postal Code:</b>
<b>Cell/home phone:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Emergency Contact:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>
<b>Dietary Restrictions/allergies:</b>	
<b>Date You Are Applying For:</b>	

*Please advise if you have any food allergies, mobility, medical, hearing or vision issues that we should be aware of. By completing this application you are indicating your intention to participate in this education opportunity and you understand that if your application is accepted and you are unable to attend you will be held responsible for any nonrefundable costs incurred and any "no-show" costs associated with non attendance.*

# PHOTO SUBMISSIONS



New Shop Stewards and Chief Shop Steward of Maintenance being sworn in at the October 6th GMM.



More than 10,000 people gathered at the October 18th Climate Strike rally at the Alberta Legislature.



October 18th AUPE support rally at the Alberta Legislature.

# THE 8-HOUR WORKDAY

## A DREAM SO CLOSE YET SO FAR AWAY

I started at Canada Post in 2008. At that time, I was a single mother struggling to make ends meet. I started as a helper for my friend who was an RSMC. At that time, RSMCs still had to pay for their own replacements and helpers – and helpers still come out of our own pockets to this day. I worked with my friend for a few weeks and then I applied for my own route. Soon I was the route owner of one of the biggest routes in the depot.

While I had an idea of what the job was about, as I had been helping my friend, I had never worked it on my own. My first day on my own route, I started at 6 am. I had five sets of flyers and about 5 lettertainers full of unsequenced mail, plus many flats and numerous parcels and packets. Management did not offer me any training or assistance. I worked until 7 pm that day and I still brought back mail. That's 13-hours on my first day, with no paid overtime.

I thought it would get better and everyone kept telling me it would get easier. As time went on, I pushed myself every day to finish my route no matter how long it took: 9 hours here, 12 hours there. Again, no paid overtime. There was the odd 8 hour day. I didn't stop for lunch. I didn't take breaks because if I brought anything back, the supervisor required me to go back out with it – and I was expected to do so for free.

I was sacrificing time with my child. My mental and physical health were also taking a hit. I dreaded Mondays and wondered how much mail I would have, knowing that I would be responsible for getting it all done on my own. My life revolved around hating Mondays. The anxiety consumed me. The kicker was that I still wasn't making enough money to make ends meet. I was making more than I was at my prior retail job, but now I was paying gas as another expense for my job and my vehicle allowance was not enough to cover the inflation of the gas prices or the cost to maintain my car.

But they were right: it did get better. But only after years, after people had retired and I was able to change depots and get a route that was more manageable – because not all RSMC routes are created equal. They are based on points of call and the time it takes to drive. It doesn't matter if that point of call is a senior that gets no mail or if it is a small business based out of their home: we get paid the same amount regardless of how long it takes to sort and deliver that point of call.

There are still a lot of RSMCs (including Permanent Relief Employees and On Call Relief Employees) working more than 8 hours in a day on a regular basis, even though their Schedule A states that their route is valued at under 8 hours.

One would think that after a decade the job would be easier or they would, at the very least, pay us for the sacrifice of our work-life balance.

However, it has sadly not changed much at all.

We work to get the job done because if we come back with mail today, it's still there tomorrow. We are also expected to finish the mail that is presented each day or face discipline. The Corporation has "tried" to be more understanding about our long hours and bringing back mail in an effort to reduce injury rates, but employees are still facing discipline when they've worked 10+ hours – only being paid for up to 8, never overtime – and are so exhausted that they make a mistake.

Where does the Corporation's slogan "Make it Safe, Make it Home" sit with the RSMCs when not all hours worked are paid and we are expected to be out on the street until 8 pm?

We are fighting for all hours paid. How many free hours have we worked for a company that shows so little appreciation for their employees? How many of us have been reprimanded for making mistakes after

being overburdened for many days in a row – not just even over “peak season”?

Long weekends are a nightmare. We are being offered the opportunity to come in on our rightfully given days off just so our days after the long weekend will be less painful. We have sacrificed our work-life balance for this job that pays less than minimum wage when we work so many extra hours.

It shouldn't be on us to make our jobs easier: we work for a huge crown corporation that has money, even if they say otherwise. They should be accommodating us on the days where we are overburdened. They should be offering to help when they know our routes are 3-times heavier than normal on a Tuesday after a long weekend, for example.

All hours paid would mean we would be paid for working 12-hours if that's how long it took. That being said, the Corporation may be more willing

to offer assistance if they had to fork out overtime to each and every one of us. While pay equity has given us paid breaks, we still have a very long way to go before we have actual pay equity with the Urban Collective Agreement.

We deserve to be able to go home to our families at night and spend time with them without being exhausted due to overburdening. We deserve to have a healthy life, physically and mentally. We deserve to have safer working conditions with less overburdening. We deserve to stay home on long weekends. We deserve an 8-hour work day and to have all hours paid.

Stand strong. We've got this. 🗳️

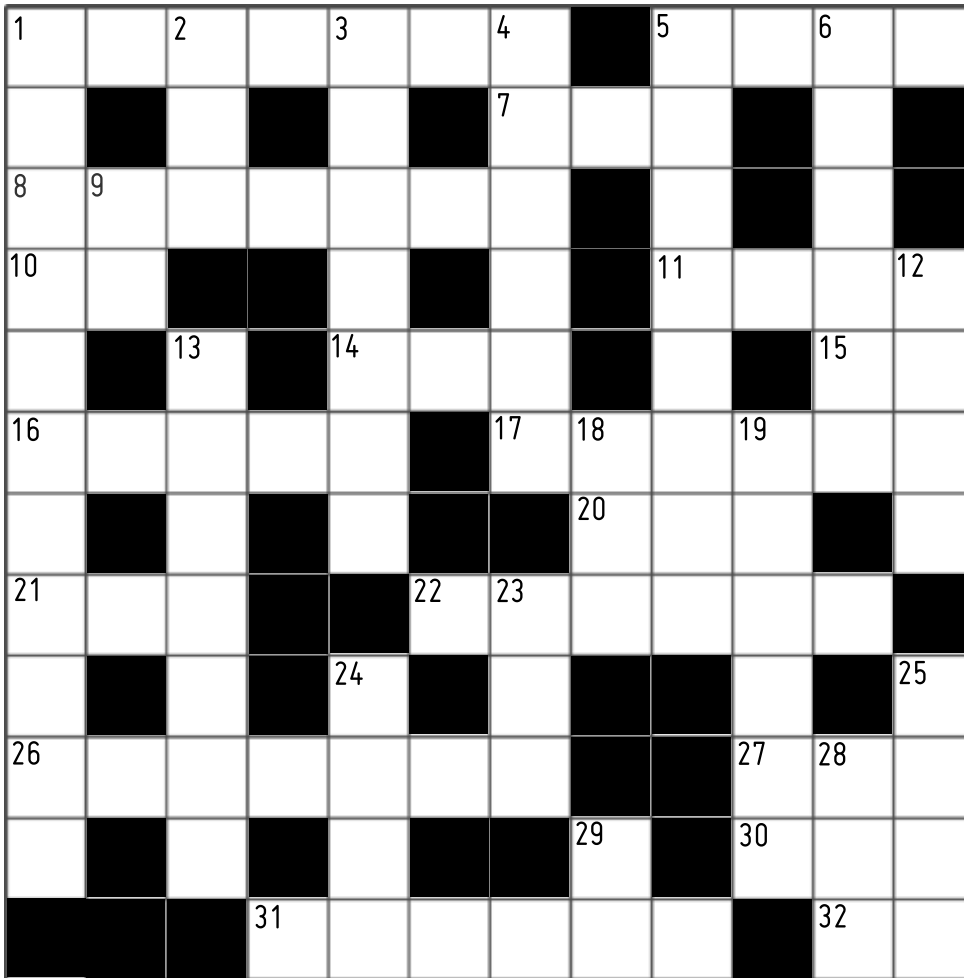
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*By Elizabeth Tjostheim, Chief Shop Steward of RSMCs and Rosedale RSMC.*

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Crossword by Nathen (Edmonton Downtown)



Solution to Previous Puzzle:



**Across**

- 1 Current boundaries were established in 1905, when it became a province
- 5 The Civil Service Association of Alberta (founded March 26, 1919) is now known by this acronym for Alberta Union of Provincial Employees
- 7 Idle chatter
- 8 Battle of \_\_\_; Capital of Louis Riel's provisional government during the northwest rebellion of 1885
- 10 within the bounds of
- 11 \_\_\_ Formula; the formula provides that employers must deduct union dues from all employees
- 14 Lou Gehrig's Disease
- 15 direction toward
- 16 device for detecting objects, not directly visible, by measuring the time it takes for a radio beam to be reflected back.
- 17 \_\_\_ Island, 2km from Tofino B.C. in Clayoquot sound
- 20 a metric unit of area equal to 100 square meters
- 21 Trades & Labour Congress; initially founded in 1883 as the Canadian Labour Congress
- 22 a combat between large bodies of organized forces whether on land or sea
- 26 \_\_\_ Character Reader
- 27 to take a short slumber, to doze
- 30 connection placed on a telephone line for surreptitious listening
- 31 distinct provision of a document such as a contract, treaty, or law
- 32 toward or in a higher place or position

**Down**

- 1 Settlement of a dispute by an individual chosen and agreed upon by both parties
- 2 metal mouthpiece of a bridle
- 3 Rocket \_\_\_; right wing of the Montreal Canadiens 1942-1960
- 4 discrimination on the basis of age
- 5 Bible Bill broadcast a radio program called Back to the Bible Hour. Became premier of Alberta and the head of the first Social Credit government anywhere in the world in 1935
- 6 Jaques \_\_\_; goalie of the Montreal Canadiens 1952-1963
- 9 (chem) Actinon
- 12 quantity of medicine to be taken at one time
- 18 to consume
- 19 to become less cruel become more compassionate
- 23 Alberta Federation of Labour; founded in 1912 by mining workers and tradespeople in Lethbridge for occupational health/safety regulations in Alberta's coalfield
- 24 British Columbia Federation of Labour; founded in 1910
- 25 Edmonton Parcel Processing Plant
- 28 Amateur Athletic Union
- 29 (chem) Arsenic

# ARBITRATION CONTINUES

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17TH, 2019

*By Nancy Beauchamp (Chief Negotiator, RSMC bargaining unit) and Sylvain Lapointe (Chief Negotiator, Urban bargaining unit).*

We continued with our busy arbitration schedule by completing 8 days of hearings in the last three weeks. We have now completed 32 days of hearings. We presented our entire case in 20 days, which included hearing evidence and the cross-examination of 28 witnesses.

So far Canada Post has used 12 days of hearings and we have heard evidence from 3 witnesses. They still have their fourth witness on the stand and have at least 3 more witnesses to go after that.

## October 8 & 9

We began the week with our cross examination of Canada Post's witness Jean-Laurent Rousset, General Manager of Customer Experience. We challenged Mr. Rousset's evidence regarding the need for "flexibility" in Group 1 staffing, by indicating just how much flexibility Canada Post currently has for Group 1 staffing.

We also challenged Mr. Rousset's representation that Canada Post was struggling in the parcel business and that maybe 2019 wouldn't be a good year for parcel growth.

We presented documents showing that Canada Post is forecasting to have a very good "Peak Season" this year. No one can say what the final results for 2019 will be, but it is clear that Canada Post is optimistic with its forecasts. This goes against much of the theme presented by Canada Post's first two witnesses.

Canada Post then began with the testimony of Mr. Sanjay Paliwal, General Manager of Delivery Transformation. His testimony continued the same gloom and doom theme as Canada Post's first three witnesses. He then talked about some of the changes that Canada Post has made to address these challenges, such as Postal Transformation, the 5 Point Action Plan and Separate Sort and Delivery (SSD).

Yes, much of this was addressed by previous Canada Post witnesses.

## October 10

Mr. Paliwal continued his lengthy testimony, going into great detail about the Letter Carrier Route Measurement System (LCRMS) and letter carrier restructures.

He then went on to discuss letter carrier workload and overtime and the clauses in the collective agreement used to manage workload and overtime.

## Upcoming Dates

The next hearing dates are October 23 and 30. Canada Post has scheduled visits to three different smaller post offices on these dates.


The cross examination of Mr. Paliwal will begin when Canada Post completes his evidence in chief, whenever that is.

## What is CPC Up To?

It is not clear if CPC's strategy to have their witnesses read passages after passages of the collective agreement, or spend hours on issues that are not in front of the arbitrator, is designed to ensure that the arbitration is extended past the federal election.

Perhaps they are hoping for a Conservative majority?

Be assured we are doing everything we can to move the arbitration forward without compromising our case.

It's time for Canada Post to recognize that workers are an asset, not a liability! 

# SOLIDARITY STYLE

## OFFICIAL CUPW 730 T-SHIRTS



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**LOCAL DESIGNED & UNION MADE IN CANADA**

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# TOGETHER - WE ARE - MIGHTY!



**General Membership Meeting**  
Saturday, November 2, 2019

Local Office - 18121 107 AVE, Edmonton  
Doors 10:30am, Event 11:00am