



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF CUPW 730

FALL 2024

INSIDE OUT



INSIDE OUT 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. Submissions of general interest to the membership may also be considered.

All submissions for publication are subject to the approval of the Local President, and may be edited 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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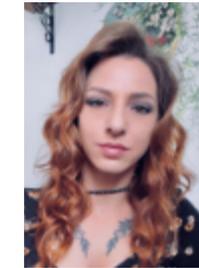
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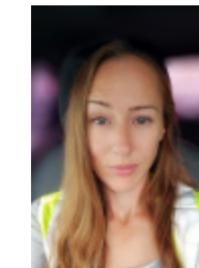
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2024

Friends and comrades,

Thank you for coming out to our first strictly in-person GMM in years. It's good to see everyone's shining, happy faces. I wish that we were meeting in happier times, but the reality is that we are gearing up for a fight. Possibly the fight of our generation.

Canada Post has refused to negotiate in good faith. Flat out refusing to discuss some of the biggest issues on the table, such as wages and benefits. Instead, they have said that unless we accept SSD, dynamic routing, and flex benefits, they will not discuss any other topics.

There may have been a glimmer of hope that the federally-appointed conciliators could have moved the discussions along so that we could avoid a labour dispute. However, I just found out that Canada Post negotiators have refused to meet with our negotiators on Mondays, Fridays, and weekends. This is not the action of a party acting in good faith. This is how a corporation stalls. It is quite

apparent that the Corporation is conspiring with the Federal Government, just like the railroad tycoons conspired to break the Teamsters Rail negotiation.

Regardless of what the Corporation is doing, our next steps require every single postal worker to show up to a strike vote and vote yes in favour of a strike. The unity demonstrated by a high turnout shows that we are not going to accept rollbacks and cuts. By voting yes to a strike, you are declaring that you see a future for Canada Post. You see a robust retail network across the country providing postal banking, postal and community services for Canadians. Not a third-rate logistics company run by imbeciles.

Canada Post is being intentionally run into the ground in order to justify privatization. Postal workers need to seize control of this company and set a new course. This could sound like a fantasy to some, or an awful nightmare to others. The reality is that the post

needs to change, and that change will only happen if postal workers fight for it.

Over the next month, the Edmonton Local will be holding strike votes across the city and affiliates. We are going to change how we host them, with new times and locations making it more convenient. For the Edmonton facilities, we are chartering buses to hold the vote outside the depots and the plant. For other locations, we are holding the meetings early in the day so that members can vote prior to their shift.

The goal is every postal worker votes. We on the Executive are doing everything we know how to do to make that possible. The rest is up to you. You and your coworkers are going to decide if we are going to fight for a raise and better benefits or if we are going to accept the cuts that Canada Post is proposing.

There is no grey area here. We fight or we lose. The choice is yours.



DEVON RUNDVALL (HE/HIM)



PRESIDENT
CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS
LOCAL 730 - EDMONTON & AFFILIATES

IN LOVING MEMORY OF DEVON RUNDVALL (1978-2024), CUPW EDMONTON 730 LOCAL PRESIDENT

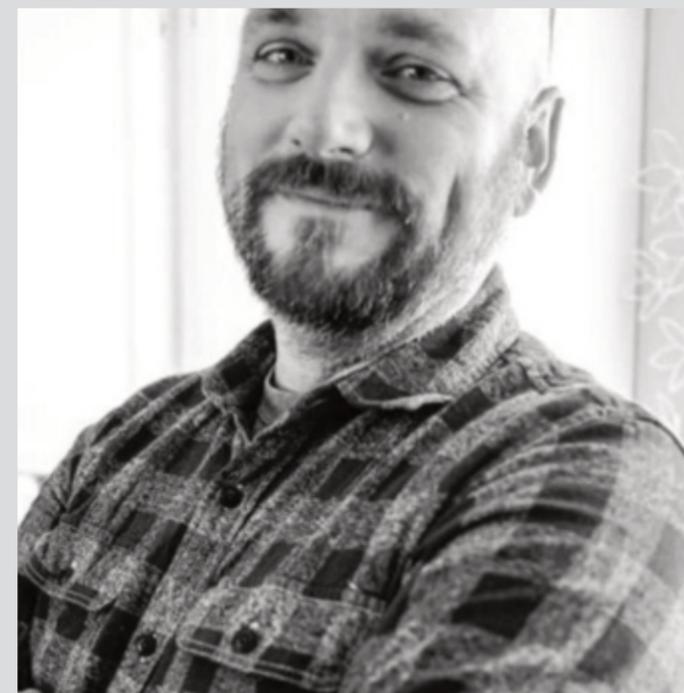
Devon had heart and passion for his activism within the labour movement. He held many roles within CUPW over the years including Education Officer, VP1 and finally, Local President (2022-2024). He led selflessly. He spent his time listening to members' concerns and standing up for what was right in every situation. He had no problem telling management where they were wrong, and standing up for what was right, a good example of this was when he was almost arrested for standing up with workers in the EMPP in 2023.

Devon was a kind and caring person, and he made sure that those he loved knew this through his actions. He was always open to listening to what was going on in others' lives, and he fondly talked about his kids often and how proud he was of them. He was passionate about his work within the labour movement, he aspired to make the world a better place, and the world was better with him in it. He made connections which became friendships all over the country, and made an impact on many lives just through his work within CUPW.

We miss him dearly, and are crushed that he is gone.

Rest in Power, Brother.

Elizabeth Smallwood



ACTION UPDATE: ROSEDALE FLYER REFUSAL

In the Spring of 2019, workers at the Rosedale Depot in Edmonton were presented with a flyer that was an ad for an energy company combined with some offer of a gift for switching companies.

It came with the direction to deliver it full-coverage, meaning that even customers who do not want flyers would receive it. According to our employer's own rules, there are very specific guidelines for when a flyer can be delivered full-coverage. When workers tried to tell management that this was incorrect, management responded by saying it was fine and it was within the rules.

Workers marched on the boss twice to do a mass refusal. Six workers were audited and eventually received 1-day suspensions, but the word travelled across the province and workers in other cities were told by management that this flyer was not to be delivered as full-coverage.

Now, 5-years later as these grievances for the suspensions are approaching their arbitration date, the Corporation has been settling them: members are being paid for that day they lost to suspension.

The workers were right and their collective action worked. This was also the inciting incident that led to the Edmonton Local creating the Taking Back Our Workfloor course, which eventually turned into the National program known as Building Worker Power. 

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF LABOUR MEDIA AWARDS 2024

I am very pleased to announce that the Edmonton Local received recognition for 3 categories at this year's CALM Awards.

Ed Finn Award for excellence in writing for print (volunteer): This award is granted for excellence in writing for print and was won by Kathleen Mpulubusi for her excellent account of her pilgrimage to Camp Morgan in Winnipeg, MB. From CALM: "In clear, concise language, the writer describes her experience, the power of reconciliation and the impact it has had on her own journey through life."

Best Photo (volunteer): We were very lucky to be able to feature the work of Edmonton photographer Darlene Hildebrandt, who was also a part of the pilgrimage to Camp Morgan. From CALM: "Considering that the issue of searching the landfill was a major election point in Manitoba, this image is all the more powerful [...] The photo itself is a great angle, and a colourful contrast. With a solid focus of the woman raising the feather." (To see more of Darlene's work, visit <https://gallery.digitalphotomentor.com>.)

Rosemarie Bahr Award (volunteer): This award is granted for excellence in print layout and design in a regular print publication for imaginative and effective use of graphics, cartoons, photography, typography and layout. From CALM: "CUPW 730 demonstrates a really consistent editorial layout with this publication while keeping a generous amount of white space. The consistent branding colour and font use helps tie the whole publication together."

For this last one, not only do we need to thank everyone who contributes to the InsideOut, but also the work from the Communications Committee itself. I feel like I would be remiss if I didn't mention the consistent work of Wendy Crispin, whose sense of layout and design has really shaped the InsideOut.

Thank you to everyone who contributes and makes the publication possible! 

-Kyle Turner, Communications Officer



WORKER SOLIDARITY

LABOUR VICTORY AND STRUGGLE, AT HOME AND ABROAD



Communications Workers of America - More than 500 workers of the World of Warcraft development team have joined the CWA. Designers, engineers, producers, artists, quality assurance testers, and other developers have formed the World of Warcraft Game Makers Guild (WoWGG-CWA). In addition, more than 200 workers at Bethesda Game Studios have also joined CWA recently, with Microsoft voluntary recognizing the union.

Ontario Public Service Employees Union – Workers at the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) represented by OPSEU reached a new agreement with their employer after a two week strike in July. The new contract includes wage, severance, and benefits improvements, but also includes a guarantee of no store closures and a cap on the number of private liquor stores.

United Food and Commercial Workers 1518 – 400 workers at five Highline Mushroom farms in British Columbia. The most recent 210 members to join are from the Langley location and are temporary workers from Guatemala, Mexico, India, and Vietnam. According to UFCW's bulletin, this is the largest group of farm workers in Canadian history to join a union.

Confédération des syndicats nationaux – Around 200 workers at an Amazon warehouse in Laval, Québec, have joined the CSN. Amazon tried to fight it, arguing that it somehow did not respect the interest of its employees, but the union was successfully certified in early May.

International Longshoremen's Association – Nearly 50,000 members of the ILA went on strike along the east coast of the United States at the beginning of October. After being on strike for 3-days, negotiators managed to reach a tentative agreement that sees workers getting a 62% pay increase over the next 6-years.

Unifor – More than 800 workers at a Walmart warehouse in Mississauga, ON, voted to join Unifor Local199 in September. 

STRIKE VOTE RESULT:

Friday October 25 2024 National Bulletin 2023-2027/148

CUPW members from the Urban Operations and Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMC) units have overwhelmingly voted in favour of strike action, if needed, to achieve their bargaining goals.

In our recent strike votes, members were asked whether they supported authorizing the CUPW National Executive Board to initiate strike activities if necessary to secure our demands, prevent employer rollbacks, and improve public services.

The provisional results of the vote are as follows:

Urban Operations Unit: **95.8% YES**

Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers Unit: **95.5% YES**

The Negotiating Committees deeply appreciate this tremendous show of support from the membership. Now, more than ever, it is critical that we stay united and unwavering. We are 55,000 strong. Together we are unstoppable!

In solidarity,

Jan Simpson
National President

SPRUCE GROVE COLLECTIVE ACTION: KEEP PUSHING FORWARD



By Ryan Theriault, Lead Shop Steward RSMC West Zone

It can be easy to think that you and your union can accomplish little, especially after years of working in a depot where management was able to act as they please. In this article, Ryan shares a story of how the workers at Spruce Grove came together to pull a memorandum of agreement that was making the RSMCs miserable and not delivering on the promises that had been initially made.

It's 7:30 am. I'm walking into my depot and I can already hear a few members who are already upset over not having enough spare cases. "Here we go again," I say in my head. This isn't new and it's getting old.

The RSMCs in Spruce Grove have been sharing cases since around the time of the COVID protocols, when a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was put in place. The MOA was supposed to allow RSMCs to have overtime, but few, if any, have ever received it.

I walk over to one sister who is clearly upset and I say, "No spare cases, eh?" She responds, "Just the way it is. Not like we can do anything about it. Once something leaves this building, it never comes back." It was fair for her to feel that way. For far too many years, that mentality was the norm in the depot and for years management hammered this idea into us, preventing anyone from challenging their authority. Yet things change, and nothing is ever truly permanent.

Spruce Grove is one of the few depots that exclusively employs RSMCs for

delivery, operating with approximately 36 routes and around 60 employees total. Before my time, there was only one active Shop Steward, and the depot was desperately in need of RSMC representation. Our sole Shop Steward did their best, but the workload was overwhelming, especially since they weren't an RSMC. How could they truly grasp the unique challenges we face?

For my first couple of years, I probably couldn't even tell you what a Shop Steward was: like many others just starting out, I was simply trying to learn the job and survive. Not long after my second year, a new person transferred to our depot, someone who would quickly make a significant and lasting impact. Vanessa, like myself, came from Ontario. She had been an RSMC for 15-years and had been actively involved with her last Local.

Agitate/Educate

I remember covering a route one week, with my case positioned across from Vanessa. As we chatted, I realized just how knowledgeable she was about the inner workings of our depot. She not only educated me about these issues but also provided documentation, proving she wasn't just a loud voice: she had valid reasons to speak out against the wrongdoings in our workplace.

When she arrived, she quickly identified several problems in our facility, including outdated and unsafe equipment. Understanding the strength of a united Local, Vanessa reached out to the Edmonton Local office and discovered valuable classes for us to take, including one called Building Worker Power.

One day, she mentioned this course and other upcoming courses. I had no idea how it all worked or that I would be paid to attend. Not fully understanding, I casually responded, "Oh, that's cool. Maybe one day I'll go." The next day, Vanessa said to me, "I filled out the form for you to attend, but if you really don't want to, we can cancel." This turned out to be just the push I needed to begin my personal journey – one that would ultimately transform our depot as well.

Not only would Vanessa and I take the course, but we also managed to get two others – Melodie and Sandra, both experienced RSMCs – on board. They were extremely knowledgeable and quickly resonated with Vanessa's passion for fighting for what was right. The four of us thoroughly enjoyed our time in the course, leaving with the tools and clear plan to tackle our biggest challenge: reclaiming our sortation cases and ending case-sharing.

Organizing

One of the fundamental strategies we learned was how to initiate a petition, and we quickly organized one. Every single RSMC signed up. Understandably, I was told more than once, "Good luck, Ryan, but there's no way those cases are coming back. Once they leave this building, they're gone for good." Never letting it bother any of us, we moved forward with what we had learned from the Building Worker Power course, and we readied ourselves to present our petition to management.

However, things didn't unfold as we anticipated, and it turned out to be the best thing that could've happened.

The member of management we intended to present our petition to happened to be away the week that we planned on presenting it. The relief covering this absence was someone that was well-known and liked within our depot, so we thought, "Why not have a conversation with him?"

We went into his office and began to explain the challenges of our RSMCs and the struggle they faced each day with not having a proper place to work or proper time to prepare. He was very receptive and said, "I hear you, and I see you have signatures from everyone. But, understand, this isn't my depot so I can't do much to help you."

Hearing that, we were prepared to leave when he added, "However, I see you have an MOA in place. If I were you, I'd seriously consider reviewing that if the current setup isn't working for you." And, boy, did we ever look at it.

Unity

It was then that we took the idea of pulling the MOA to Devon Rundvall, the President of our Local. We talked about the MOA and how no one was getting any overtime, something that was promised by the MOA. Devon explained to us, "If we cancel the MOA, they will have to revert back to the way things were before case-sharing started." Vanessa and I said, "OK, but can we do that?"

I will always remember Devon saying, with a chuckle and a smile across his face, "I'm not exactly sure, but I'm gonna find out."

Not long after that, Devon learned that we absolutely could pull the MOA. With an MOA, either party has the right to cancel it, triggering a one-year timeline

before things revert to the original terms. Over the next year, we had frustratingly few conversations about the MOA. A former higher up member of management was exceedingly difficult to communicate with. On more than one occasion, we tried to reach out and go over the options that could bring the cases back, but nothing was ever done.

It wasn't until nearly 9-months had passed that someone from management finally reached out to discuss our next steps. Devon participated in a meeting with management, but to no avail – there was still very little progress made.

What we were met with was the threat that pulling the MOA could lead to the employer returning certain routes to Stony Plain and sending inside workers to work at the Edmonton Mail Processing Plant. This was surprising to hear – it sounded like an expensive option for a Corporation that was currently claiming that it lost \$748-million.

Devon believed they were bluffing in an attempt to maintain the MOA, but it was ultimately up to the workers in Spruce Grove if we wanted to call that bluff and proceed with pulling the MOA. To our surprise, however, most of our co-workers embraced a fighting mentality to keep pushing forward. I heard from so many of them, "I don't give a sh*t! We want our cases back!" I couldn't have been more proud to hear it coming from our depot. These were people who had been backed into a corner for far too long, and now they were ready to push back. They had enough.

Victory

We were two months from the date that the cases had to be back when we were told there was to be another meeting.

This one was led by a provincial manager. This manager asked that Vanessa, Sandra, and I be involved, in addition to local management and a few others, and she started by apologizing for how long it took to get this talked about: "I will own that one. This happened under my watch and it shouldn't have. This should have been dealt with months ago."

She then followed it up with asking for all of our input on what the depot could look like because the cases were coming back. What was ultimately decided on was a layout that satisfied most, which was a change that so many said couldn't be possible. I faced laughter and skepticism the whole way, but we never lost faith that it was possible.

As I write this, our depot is just two weeks away from reclaiming our cases. I've talked to everyone in our depot, through parking lot meetings and smaller conversations. So many people expressed their gratitude for the effort and time we invested, and it was worth it. Anything is possible when you have a positive mindset, the right training, and the fight and determination to keep pushing forward.

I'm reminded of one of my favourite quotes from Conan O'Brien. After being fired from The Tonight Show, he said:

"All I ask of you is one thing: please don't be cynical. I hate cynicism – it's my least favorite quality and it doesn't lead anywhere. Nobody in life gets exactly what they thought they were going to get. But if you work really hard and you're kind, amazing things will happen. As proof, let's make amazing things happen right now."

And that's exactly what we did – smiling the whole way through.



1978: YEAR OF DEFIANCE

By Robert Hohnstein

In this article, Robert provides a history of when our union defied back-to-work legislation, as well as the contemporary example of the education workers in Ontario. These different examples show that when the labour movement is united, we can win. Unfortunately, when we are not united, we have the example of CUPW in 1978.

“Only slaves cannot withdraw their labour and postal workers will never agree to become slaves.”

- Jean-Claude Parrot (Oct 21st, 1978)

Unionized workers across this country know back-to-work legislation (BTW-L) all too well. Postal workers themselves have faced BTW-L no less than half a dozen times since 1978. This malicious piece of legislation has been used to smash unions and prevent workers from winning any really meaningful demands.

In late 2022, education sector workers in Ontario became the first unionized workers to defeat BTW-L in Canada, however this was not the first attempt to do so. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) defied BTW-L when enacted by the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau in 1978. With a looming strike and the ever-present threat of BTW-L being used once again, it is more

important than ever to learn the lessons of the past.

Prelude to the '78 Strike

In December 1975, CUPW had thoroughly embarrassed the Liberal Trudeau government and landed themselves and outstanding victory

“ Management refused to recognize many of the gains of the ‘75 agreement and elected to ignore it. This was not merely management putting up a tantrum that rivals the temper of a petulant toddler, but a coordinated strategy by Canada Post to drive up the grievances of postal workers.”

against Canada Post. Sweeping concessions were won, including, but not limited to, increased rights and protections for Shop Stewards, introduction of wage premiums, protection from technological changes, increased vacation time, introduction of the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), double-time pay on rest days, no more

individual work measurement, and much more.

Management refused to recognize many of the gains of the '75 agreement and elected to ignore it. This was not merely management putting up a tantrum that rivals the temper of a petulant toddler, but a coordinated strategy by Canada Post to drive up the grievances of postal workers. This bogged the union down with tens of thousands of grievances to make workers feel like they fought for nothing and tried turning them against the union. By May 1977, over 42,000 grievances were submitted against Canada Post.

Many of the grievances were over the technological changes, increased use of temp employees, and the stagnating wages amidst the inflation crisis of the late 70s. This provoked spontaneous walkouts from the rank and file of CUPW in Vancouver, Edmonton, Ottawa, London, and St. John's in October 1976. Both CUPW and Canada Post applied injunctions against each other, but it ultimately went to mediation. While these walkouts ended, spontaneous walkouts took place over the course of the next 2-years until CUPW went on strike in October 1978.

As CUPW began to file for their right to strike after 18 long months of

negotiations, the Post Master General, Gilles Lamontagne, had threatened the union with BTW-L twice before CUPW had even acquired the right to strike. In October 1978, workers voted to strike with 78.5% voting in favour. Trudeau's Liberal government reiterated the threat to send postal workers back to work.

9 Days That Shook Canada

On October 16th, 1978, the strike began. On October 17th, the Trudeau government introduced BTW-L in the House of Commons. This was backed by the Conservative opposition and it came into effect on October 19th. Postal workers faced two contradictory laws: the law stating they had the right to strike and the draconian BTW-L. CUPW told the media they would follow whatever law would be more just given this contradiction. Postal workers defied BTW-L and stayed on the picket lines.

In the following days, workers across the country maintained strong picket lines. Scabs, supervisors, and managers needed police escorts just to get into Canada Post facilities. Workers from all walks of life came out in support of postal workers, sometimes doubling the size of the picket lines.

The Quebec section of the Public Alliance of Canada, which represented 30,000 members, offered to go on a solidarity strike. Many affiliated unions and labour organizations of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) offered messages of support and solidarity even though the leaders of the CLC actually opposed CUPW's defiance of BTW-L.

The media, on the other hand, decried CUPW. Members of the conservatives had been advocating and urging their party and in the media that the Liberals must stop the strike by any means necessary with some even calling for military intervention. One CUPW local replied in a paper that if the military was called in, it would take them a long while to figure out which way was up, so they were free to call the army in. Pro-boss

commentators made similar appraisals that military intervention was needed, but if it was called upon it was feared what happened in Winnipeg in 1919 would happen again but on a national scale.

With respect to the leadership of the CLC and the NDP, their role was of absolute betrayal. The NDP under Ed Broadbent sympathized with Jean-Claude Parrot (President of CUPW) and CUPW behind closed doors, but, in public, refused to come out in support of CUPW defying BTW-L.

“ In the following days, workers across the country maintained strong picket lines. Scabs, supervisors, and managers needed police escorts just to get into Canada Post facilities. Workers from all walks of life came out in support of postal workers, sometimes doubling the size of the picket lines.”

Parrot mentioned that this was because the CLC was in opposition to CUPW on the matter. The CLC was led by Dennis McDermott. In private, McDermott told CUPW's leadership he'd support postal workers in the then-upcoming strike, but was silent publicly every step of the way. When the strike was ongoing, he tried pressure CUPW privately to go back to work and stop defying. A leaked press release from the CLC later revealed they were ready to openly denounce CUPW in the media.

Unfortunately, a grave threat came from the Trudeau government: return to work within 7-days of when BTW-L was implemented or be fired for “job abandonment.” There were mixed feelings among postal workers. Some believed the government was bluffing

and that the strike should continue, while others crossed their own picket line as soon as they heard this threat. The rest waited for instruction from the union on what to do. After tense discussion, the National Executive of CUPW determined that they couldn't afford to gamble with workers' jobs, so they asked workers to return to work.

The strike continued until the last possible day. At the end of October 25th, 1978, the strike that dared to defy BTW-L ended in defeat. The RCMP raised union offices and seized documentation to try and further indict union leaders for defying BTW-L. The whole National Executive Board of CUPW was arrested. President Parrot was charged and sentenced to imprisonment for 3-months and to 18-months probation.

The arbitration that occurred following this strike took away many of the gains and benefits that were won previously. Despite being imprisoned, Parrot declared that the struggle for postal worker rights would continue. It was this mood that carried into the 1980 and 1981 strikes that would recover some of the rights lost as well as winning maternity leave for postal workers and assisted in making maternity leave a national issue.

This contrasts sharply to the education sector workers in Ontario of 2022, where the Ontario NDP defended those workers against BTW-L enacted by the Conservative Party – where the labour movement came out in full force, threatening to shut down the whole province by means of a general strike.

Postal workers have dared before and it is in our interest to dare again. Education workers have shown us that we can defeat BTW-L. It is time for CUPW to make up for this defeat so that we may have a future. ✈️

SEPTEMBER GMM/STRIKE PREPARATION EVENT

Our September GMM was a major success. It was our first strictly in-person GMM in years. Our GMM was followed by a strike preparation party, with refreshments organized by our Social Committee. This, in turn, was followed by a town hall meeting where members of the Local Executive discussed the potential strike/lockout and answered any questions.

We would like to thank Jody Hutton, our 3rd National Vice-President, for making the trip and attending this event. We would also like to thank all of the members of our Local who came out and made sure this event a success.



SHOP STEWARD AND LOCAL EXECUTIVE SWEAR-INS

At our September 7th GMM, Scott Fletcher, Robert Hickling, Craig Doran, Kanward Grewal, Shaun McDonald, and Eryca Begin were sworn in as Shop Stewards. At our October 5th GMM, Ryan Malmo-Harper was sworn in as Lead Steward LC (North Zone) and Rachel Lofranco was sworn in as 5th VP Auxiliary. 🗳️



EDLC LABOUR DAY BARBECUE



AMAZON IS BEEFING UP ITS ALREADY DYSTOPIAN WORKER SURVEILLANCE MACHINE

By Alex N. Press 08.24.2021
for Jacobin.com

Amazon is installing high-tech cameras inside supplier-owned delivery vehicles. Workers say the cameras are a shocking invasion of privacy as well as a safety hazard.

Earlier this year, Amazon revealed plans to install high-tech surveillance cameras in its fleet of delivery vans that are now ubiquitous in neighborhoods across the United States. The cameras watch drivers as well as the road and provide real-time audio feedback. While many of these drivers work in Amazon Prime-branded vehicles, they are not Amazon employees, but rather are employed by third-party contractors called delivery-service partners (DSPs) — an arrangement that, among other benefits, limits Amazon’s liability when accidents occur.

The surveillance technology comes from Netradyne, a California-based company that uses cameras to analyze driver activity so as to provide instant direction (“please slow down,” for instance) while also storing that data to evaluate performance in line with company metrics. In a video about Driveri, Netradyne’s platform, Karolina Haraldsdottir, a senior manager of the last-mile delivery operation at Amazon, emphasizes that the cameras are meant as a safety measure, intended to reduce collisions.

The company has cited a pilot roll-out of the cameras from last year, which they say saw accidents drop by 48 percent. The installation of Driveri is in keeping with Amazon’s roll-out of similar camera

monitoring among its long-haul trucking operation.

While drivers already use Mentor, an app that tracks their activity, Driveri adds cameras, which can offer additional data for metrics. Some DSPs have told drivers to turn off Mentor because they could not meet Amazon’s productivity quotas without violating safe-driving practices. There have now been several cases of



An Amazon Prime delivery van in downtown New Orleans, Louisiana. Tony Webster / Wikimedia Commons

DSPs shutting down entirely after finding Amazon’s demands and conditions to be “intolerable, unconscionable, unsafe, and most importantly, unlawful,” as a letter from an attorney for one such DSP put it.

Indeed, Amazon’s policies are startlingly exacting, dictating that DSPs impose the

company’s standards on details as minute as the state of drivers’ fingernails. Such is Amazon’s business model: exacting surveillance and exploitation of workers, limited liability for the company.

“Our intention in introducing this technology is to set up drivers for success,” says Haraldsdottir in the video. As she explains, certain behaviors

trigger Driveri to upload recorded footage and emit an audio alert to a driver: failure to stop at a stop sign, following someone too closely, speeding, and distracted driving (there are another twelve behaviors that will trigger uploading, but no audio warning — U-turns and driver drowsiness among them). The cameras record 100 percent

of the time, and can only be manually disabled when the ignition is off.

So, how is the roll-out of Driveri going?

“My direct supervisor mentioned that ‘a bunch of people’ said they were going to quit when the cameras were installed,” says one delivery driver based in Washington state. His DSP has just begun introducing the cameras into their fleet.

Should that happen, it would be far from the first case of drivers quitting over the installation of the technology.

“I think the cameras are needlessly invasive and completely unnecessary, especially given the other layers of surveillance and scrutiny placed upon us by Amazon,” he says. “Most, if not all, of my coworkers feel the same way.”

The drivers at the company were asked to sign a video-technology agreement earlier this year to pave the way for the cameras. The form appeared on Flex — the app Amazon drivers use to scan packages and follow GPS routes — without warning or discussion about it from the company.

Drivers’ concerns about the technology are multiple. First, there is the lack of privacy. Drivers cannot turn off the cameras while the ignition is on, meaning Driveri can see everything they do in the vehicle.

One driver told Business Insider that she wears adult diapers — an inability to find time to use the restroom is a frequent issue among Amazon’s delivery workforce — and worries about the camera capturing her changing into another one during her shift.

Then there are the practical concerns. Some of the workers drive step vans, which are particularly loud vehicles — a noisy engine, rattling doors. They say it’s hard to hear the device over the noise, and note that hard-of-hearing drivers won’t receive Driveri’s feedback either.

Additionally, there is the matter of new metrics for evaluating drivers’ performance. The data collected by Netradyne will help rank drivers, but that data will be released weekly, by which time it is hard for workers to correct suspected errors.

As one driver told Business Insider, “I get a ‘distracted driver’ notification even if I’m changing the radio station or drinking water.”

Drivers mention the difficulty of factoring unique situations — an animal sprinting into the road and causing them to slam on their brakes, for example — into the scores. They say such incidents are penalized on Mentor, and that there is little reason to suspect Driveri will be any different.

“I am now driving around with an inscrutable black box that surveils me and determines whether I keep my job,” says the delivery driver in Washington. While he says he sees how, in theory, some of the metrics are justifiable — “you don’t want your drivers Tokyo Drifting through neighborhoods” — in reality, aggregated on top of the layers of surveillance to which drivers already feel subject, it is “stifling, unnecessary, and ridiculous.”

“We’re all just out here trying to do our best, but we also have to contend with knowing that each week, computers spit out metrics for us which require multiple pages to properly display, and a drop in those abstract numbers could lose us jobs,” he says. “All I want to do is deliver my damn packages and go home, man.”



Alex N. Press is a staff writer at Jacobin. Her writing has appeared in the Washington Post, Vox, the Nation, and n+1, among other places.



Kathleen Mpulubusi was named to the Edmonton & District Labour Council’s Wall of Fame in 2024.





Thank you for attending.

This meeting is being held as much in your interest as it is in ours,

So what happened? Why did you not finish your route yesterday?

Are you serious?

We can proceed without your input if that is what you want.

Look at me. What do you think happened?

Uhhh...

In my defense, don't you always kind of look like this?

Fair enough.

Let me try again.

Your garbage robot buried me in the ravine.

WHAT. HOW DARE YOU.

Why are you making this personal?

We're all human beings. We all make mistakes.

BOO HOO HOO

Uhhh...

Don't listen to any of that. You're doing great.

Ok. Moving on.

We have received a troubling report from our S.N.I.T.C.H. Com system.

It seems you've been spending a lot of time crying in the back of your truck.

Hah, no. That thing is always going off. Must be a bug or something.

Uh huh.

The weight distribution report also suggests that you are often in the fetal position. While not yet banned under our current system, we can surely both agree that it is quite embarrassing.

We do have a little time to cry each day.

Mhmm.

I don't know if I would call 15 minutes "a little."

Do I have your commitment to spend no more than 3.25 minutes per day crying?

Yes.

OK, great! You can cry all you want on your 5-day suspension. Yes, thank you.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

SUPPRESSION OF EDMONTON'S BUS VOTE: A WORKER'S PERSPECTIVE



It is already well known that a serious disconnect exists between postal workers and their union leaders. However, recent events illustrate that our National union leaders are disconnected from far more than the workers they are elected to represent. Let's give a brief recap of these events for those readers out of the loop.

The Edmonton Local had decided to charter city buses to bring the strike votes to the workers directly. This meant postal workers all around the city could vote on the question of striking just outside their facility.

The first two votes were held at Delton and Mayfield depots and both had a participation rate of about ~95% workers voting.

The national executive of CUPW had an emergency meeting to discuss the bus voting and decided to order an immediate halting of the bus votes, citing some obscure rules (4.01, 4.02 & 9.37(m)) out of the national constitution.

Should the leaders of the Edmonton local have chosen to defy the National leadership, sanctions were threatened against the local executive of Edmonton. According to the local's statement on the matter, a potential re-vote would have to be held across the country.

The Edmonton Local decided to stand down and were forced to rent out venues to host the remaining strike votes.

The overreach of bureaucratic power, the supreme irrationality of the decision to halt the bus vote, and the rippling effects it has among workers is jaw dropping.

When our union voted on the program of demands for negotiations we had an abysmal ~18% turnout in participation. A far cry from the ~95% participation rate by bringing voting stations to the workers via bus. The buses were practically revolutionary and extremely effective in getting workers out. This is what we need if we are to win. It demonstrated quite clearly that workers do care, that they want to fight, and that union leaders need to meet the workers half-way.

It is with absolute conviction that the union must be brought to the workers if we are organize, mobilize, and properly fight Canada Post. That is the only priority! Any ham-fisted fights over the rules of constitutions in a time of class struggle is the fight for short-sighted fools and opportunist bureaucrats. The fact of the matter is the suppression of the bus vote widened the already deep chasm between the national union leaders and the membership.

To the National Executive of CUPW I must ask the question thousands are thinking - which side are you on? Postal workers or Canada Post? Did you crush the bus voting because you are too cowardly to lead workers as they show themselves ready for the fight? Is the National Executive so stingy for rules and

bureaucracy that they are willing to hamper our fight which can cost the future of 50,000 postal workers? Or is the National Executive corrupt and all too ready to sell us out? I dare not make a preemptively assumed answer, but it can be assured no answer is a good answer. It can be said though that if the National leaders fought the bosses as ferociously as they did against the Edmonton Local, Canada Post would be owned and run by the union.

Unfortunately an all-out fight is already looming. A fight against Canada Post and the government. If it can be helped, we do not want or wish to add our own union leaders to that list for that is not in our interest. In spite of our own sharp language about the national union leaders we appeal to National CUPW to not hinder us further and better yet to energetically fight for the workers rather than for constitutions and rules. The victory for our class and to defeat the enemy - the bosses at Canada Post - is the main priority and all hindrances and barriers to achieving that fundamental goal must be swept aside. If that means workers and union locals must be prepared to lead this union forward, then let us not hesitate to do so.

Robert Hohnstein
Activist in Edmonton Local 730
Member of the Revolutionary Communist Party



Kat Poch



Elizabeth Smallwood/Facebook



Ray Harper

(Left) Letter carriers at Vancouver Local 846 express their feelings about the effects of SSD on their work and well-being, with handwritten messages on a posting board created for a Day of Action.

(Below) An incredible turnout for CUPE education support workers rally at the Alberta Legislature on Saturday October 27th. With an estimated 5000+ in attendance, it may be the largest in Alberta history. Fantastic solidarity!

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