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**INSIDE OUT**  
FEBRUARY 2020



# INSIDEOUT

## EMPOWER // ORGANIZE // RESIST

InsideOut is the monthly publication of the Edmonton Local of CUPW. This newsletter aspires to educate and inform members and affiliates about our union's activities, opportunities, and challenges, as well as to raise awareness regarding all-things labour. Opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily the official views of the Local.

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

E-mail submissions to the editor ([editor@cupwedm.net](mailto:editor@cupwedm.net)) no later than the 15th of each month in order to appear in the next month's issue.

Kyle Turner, Editor  
and the InsideOut Committee

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# A YEAR IN REVIEW/MOVING FORWARD

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There's no sugarcoating it: 2019 was a brutal year for postal workers. We've spent the entire year under unconstitutional legislation discouraging us from striking to leverage a better Collective Agreement out of CPC.

A strike is the most effective weapon that workers have to force change, but until we build enough confidence to fight this unjust law, our future is being surrendered to an arbitration system designed to demoralize and demobilize us.

When arbitration was imposed in December 2018, it was only supposed to last 90 days. After that, it was extended to December 2019, and now it has been extended again to June 2020. When CPC delays, the arbitrator – the same person CPC recommended as such to the government – happily lets them keep taking advantage.

If CPC genuinely cared about the principles of their 'Make it Safe, Make it Home' campaign, they would be at the table negotiating improvements to the chronic overburdening and under-staffing that contributes to 25% of our colleagues getting injured every year. Instead, we're pushed through another peak season using the same broken methods.

The whole system is a farce, but, of course, we all know that.

### What is the Union doing?

It's as true now as it's ever been: our members benefit most when the union is strong, and our union is strongest when our work floors are organized and mobilized. As disheartening as the legislation and arbitration have been, the Edmonton local has refused to stand idle. Instead of waiting for a broken system to deliver us justice, we have taken matters into our own hands: almost every facility/shift in the city has led job actions as a result of our work floor organizer recruitment and education campaign. Bully bosses, admail violations, staffing cuts, witch hunts



*December 2019 GMM.*

on our Stewards... anywhere we've stood together and fought back, we've meaningfully improved our working conditions and workplaces.

If we keep nurturing this momentum into 2020, we'll continue to grow this movement beyond Edmonton to the rest of our union and take on bigger problems such as unconstitutional legislation. Below is a report detailing more of what our local has been up to over the past 7 months and what we're collectively doing to empower our members and fight back regardless of what happens with arbitration, whenever it concludes.

If 2019 was the year of our discontent, let's make 2020 the year of our reprisal. The struggle continues.

### President's Report to December General Membership Meeting

Today marks the last GMM of a turbulent year where not only our local but our entire union was severely demoralized by another round of back-to-work legislation. As devastating as having our rights violated once again was, I'm extremely proud of how our local has responded during my time as President over the last 6 months.

Since June, we've recruited over 200 work floor activists, sworn in 10 new Shop Stewards, more

than doubled our average GMM attendance, and passed a slate of policies enshrining accountability for both our Stewards and leadership. For the first time in recent memory, our work floors are starting to mobilize themselves. What started with EDDD and Rosedale depots refusing flyer overburdening grew into Rosedale and Mayfield RSMCs demands for proper compensation for their reliefs, Depot 2's confrontations over fraudulent restructures and improper parking, Delton and Shift 1 parcels marching against bully supervisors, and Shift 2 MLs standing up to staffing cuts.

It's no small thing to challenge authority and it must be said that many of those participating in these job actions were doing so for the first time. Many of you who helped make this possible are in the room today and I want to give my deepest appreciation for your inspiring work. You are the beating heart of this local. Thank you.

Before I became President, members consistently expressed a desire to see more of and more from our union officers on the work floor. I've continued to take these concerns to heart and I have made more than 80 facility, affiliate, and shift visits. With each visit, I've held work floor meetings to share the latest news, promote education opportunities, take questions, collect contact information (our e-mail list has jumped from 900 to 1500 contacts), and conduct referendum votes.

This persistent contact with members is important because, especially now, there are countless ways our activists are helping to strengthen our organization that our members need to hear about. With that, I want to give special acknowledgements to most of the Chief Shop Stewards for their excellent work in helping me navigate a deeply flawed consultation system; the route measurement team for keeping members informed of CPC's latest value fraud; the InsideOut committee for their ongoing excellent work to provide a truly quality publication with invaluable analysis; and especially the Education chair, Devon, his committee, and new co-facilitators, for successfully conducting an unprecedented 12 courses in such a short amount of time to empower our local. Again, thank you.

By all metrics, our local is flourishing, but we are far from realizing our true potential. We still have funds allocated for 3 more organizer training courses. From my visits this past week to Delton, Mayfield, Depot 2, and Whitemud South, I've collected 48 applications for the next 3 courses we have scheduled for mid-January. I'll continue with the recruitment presentations and updates when I visit other facilities over the next couple of weeks.

The reason for our perpetual recruitment and education drive is two-fold. First, this forever-delayed arbitration is a sham that, I'll bet, will not satisfactorily address our overburdening and short-staffing concerns. When this arbitration fails us, and we are no longer under the tyranny of the back-to-work legislation, we need to be prepared to take the fight to CPC.

Second, true unionism and solidarity is about empowering workers to decide their own fate through mass collective action. This can never happen without an uncompromising belief in, and promotion of, work floor organizing and a training program to increase the likelihood of successful job actions. There is no such thing as having too many trained and coordinated organizers; the more we have, the more confident the work floors are to engage in action, the more likely we will succeed in those actions, the more likely our conditions will improve, and the more likely more of our members will be inspired to actively support the cause.

Speaking of the cause, Edmonton has been a guiding light for not only our Region but also the rest of the country. On November 28th, I helped lead a conference call with officers from our Regional Office as well as the Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg locals. In this call, a formal invitation was made for these locals to promote and hold the same organizer training course our local developed.

To insure the success of the course, Edmonton will send facilitators (at the hosts' expense) to help train the first course and get the locals self-sustaining to continue to run their own courses. From there, a Regional organizing committee – the first of its kind for CUPW – would be established to coordinate



*New Shop Steward being sworn in.*

activities between the locals so that we can exert greater pressure on CPC. We hope to have training dates finalized for these locals before the new year so that we can begin our training expansion in January.

To be clear, again, this would have never happened if not for the efforts and commitment of the activists of this local.

This organizing drive was also the logical origin of our defiance referendum. The fact that other locals are now trying to hold their own referendums and that National is compelled to re-prioritize the prospect of defiance is only possible because of the willingness of Edmonton members to do what it takes to improve their working conditions.

It's old news now that Edmonton voted 83% in favour of defying legislation if it had the proper support. What's new is that the National Executive finally responded to our open letter. Since then, I've had two opportunities (the most recent being November 29th) to discuss with them what our next move should be. The hard truth is that our union does not have the financial ability to bankroll our members if fines were handed out en masse. Even with a \$20-million war chest, that would mean only half our membership would be able to defy legislation for one day and be fined.

That said, the belief was never that any of us could ever afford these fines but that if enough of us fought, the fines would not be enforceable. This is a worthy

long-term objective that we must never lose sight of.

Members of the National Executive acknowledged that if our union is ever to be in a position to meaningfully test this, it must first embrace a deliberate strategy to train and prepare its membership. In that vein, our National Director, Lana Smidt, and our 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Vice-Presidents agreed to maintain discussions with Edmonton and our Regional Education Officer, Dave Lambert, to explore the best ways to expand the Prairie organizing program to other Regions.

Steps have already been taken to set up a call with the Ontario Region. The feeling is that once the rest of Prairie and then, hopefully, Ontario inevitably benefit from putting more resources into work floor organizing, that National will be in a better position to aggressively promote a Canada-wide organizing strategy to enact the Action Plan unanimously passed at our last National Convention.

What started six months ago as one local's honest appeal for CUPW to return to the organizing methods that once gave our union its greatest expressions of strength has grown into the beginning of a legitimate movement. It can't be stated enough: a tremendous change is sweeping through our union which would have never happened if not for the willingness of many of you to become active in our union for the first time and inject our workplaces and committees with new ideas and energy.

If this union ever gets to the point of meaningfully facing down corporate abuse and government oppression, it will be because of what we started here, together, in Edmonton. You are the catalyst. Look what you've accomplished in six short months. Imagine where we'll be in six more if we maintain our direction. ✈️



*By Roland Schmidt, CUPW Local 730 President.*

# FROM THE EDITOR

## AN INTERVIEW WITH WARREN MELNYK

Before getting into the interview I did with CUPW's Warren Melnyk regarding depot restructures, I would like to address two points.

The first point is the cover. This is a bit of a joke. In the last issue, a bully supervisor was named. Management in the EMPP began confiscating issues of the InsideOut if they found them laying around. This is a futile exercise because everyone already knows who the bullies are. Stop wasting time picking up newsletters and spend more time addressing the behaviour of your supervisors.

Second, we received an e-mail from former National President of CUPW Jean-Claude Parrot. He congratulated us for having an excellent publication. We're certainly bashful about the description and, if it's true, we hope we can continue living up to it.

All right, now let's get on to the interview, in which Warren talks about his time with CUPW, how he became involved with route measurement, and how the Corporation's Route Measurement Officers (RMOs) earn bonuses at our expense.

### Interview with Warren Melnyk

**Kyle: How long have you been working for Canada Post? Have you been involved with the union the entire time?**

Warren: I started at Canada Post in August of 1981. I worked inside part-time until 1984 and then full-time until 1990. I went back to part-time and transferred to be a letter carrier in around 1993.

I was first nominated to be a Shop Steward in around 1984 and I learned a lot in those years. When I transferred to be a letter carrier, I wanted to take a break from that but it was not to be. I couldn't watch management conduct themselves in the way they did. For letter carriers, there was a real make or break attitude – and they broke more than they made back then.

**When did you become involved with route measurement? Was there a particular incident that got you interested?**

Route measurement is something that I sort of fell into. I ended up working at the old Depot 11 and there was a Shop Steward there named Beth who was a long time activist in route measurement. CPC was doing a restructure in Depot 11 and Beth was to be the observer. She was going on holidays for one week and asked the Corporation to postpone the build, but CPC refused and they told her to find someone else.

Beth knew my reputation and the fact that I was doing tax accounting at the time and asked if I would sit in. She gave me a two day crash course in route measurement. I guess I enjoyed it and I knew I just needed to take good notes for a week, so I volunteered to observe. In the end, CPC decided to delay until Beth returned. I knew then that I wanted to get involved!

**During one restructure, the Corporation's RMO was handed a bonus cheque in front of you. Do you know what criteria the RMOs must meet in order to receive these bonuses?**

It was the Delton restructure when the RMO Superintendent handed out bonus cheques during the volume count. I'm not privy to exactly how the bonus works, but they have to meet certain targets like operations management and there are graduating bonus levels.


Route Optimization has no sales or operating cost savings, so their bonus can really only be based on what they cut out, not what they put in.

CPC management, for example, has two bonuses: their "at risk," if they don't meet targets, and the same CTI bonus as in the CUPW Urban contract. We keep earning them profits but we have not seen that bonus since the early 1990s – nor have we seen a wage increase in 3-years. Some members and I refer to the CTI as the "can't touch it" bonus.

In recent restructures, we see the Corporation aggressively cutting routes. This happened at Delton and Depot 2, and we know they're working on cutting time values at Whitemud South. What do you anticipate for the upcoming restructures at Rosedale and Mayfield?

I hope that this will be a rallying point for our members – how can they get cash bonuses when we can't afford to get a raise?

There were delays in the Depot 4 and 8 final route packages. After the dispute in Delton and the absolute frustration with Depot 2, management did find errors with parcel volumes. We were told that the daily PDT data uploads by letter carriers were not registering in their system. As a result, the parcel volume counts were being compared to zero for one week. I think it's actually much more than that and this makes sense in relation to what happened at Delton too, but no one will confirm. As of right now, the net result is 1 part-time route gained in Depot 8 and 1 part-time loss with 2 full-time routes gained in Depot 4.

For Rosedale and Mayfield, I am cautiously optimistic. There was a lot of work done to verify physical pacing and timings going into both. CUPW representatives continue a little further with that. There is also lots of new interest from letter carriers and this is encouraging. There are very intelligent people that we work with who have various backgrounds and this can only help us to better understand and deal with the difficulties we will certainly be faced with in the future. 

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*By Kyle Turner, Editor.*

## HIGHS AND LOWS

### 2019 IN REVIEW FOR RSMCS

*By Elizabeth Tjostheim, Chief Shop Steward RSMCs.*

For RSMCs, 2019 brought pay equity, but what does this mean? In September 2018, arbitrator Maureen Flynn issued her decision on compensation to address the lack of pay equity between RSMCs and Urban Operations, which essentially brought up RSMC wages to the same rate as letter carriers in the Urban Collective Agreement.

While we do all the same work – delivering mail, admail, and parcels – there was still an approximate 35% wage gap between RSMCs and letter carriers. In January 2019, the first things implemented as a part of Flynn's decision were a wage increase and better benefits, including disability insurance, post-retirement benefits, special leave, and more. RSMCs were also given pensionable time values for PCIs and lock changes. This was implemented in late 2019, along with rest periods, retroactive to 2016.

While pay equity was a win for everyone, there are still many things that need to be addressed for RSMCs before we have equality.

2019 proved itself to be a difficult year for all of us as the 2018 back-to-work legislation meant that our collective bargaining rights were stripped from us along with a contract that could, if they so choose, include safer working conditions. Instead, arbitration continued through all 12 months of the year and we ended up working under the same unsafe conditions through Christmas 2019.

This meant no overtime for RSMCs during 'peak season,' which is the busiest and most profitable time of the year. Our employer continues to undervalue the labour of RSMCs by not paying overtime when we find ourselves working 12-hour days and by only paying the bare minimum for weekend delivery.

To add insult to injury, any parcels delivered on the weekends were not paid with pensionable time values. This contradicted the ruling by Arbitrator



Flynn. During peak season, most employees work 6-day work weeks, taking time away from family and other important life events to deliver larger amounts of parcels at the lowest possible wage. The message was clear: our time is not as valuable, yet we are doing the same job.

However, 2019 did have some positive moments. In the Summer, employees around the city stood together to address issues of pay and inconsistency with staffing in depots. One depot confronted management about a bully supervisor and this yielded almost immediate results. RSMCs showed that standing in solidarity is always better than fighting any battle alone.

In the Spring, Mayfield's RSMCs underwent a restructure. With this happening before the full implementation of pay equity, routes were designed to be, on average, 6.8 to 7.5 hours. This did not include pensionable variable values or rest periods. Delton, Spruce Grove, Fort Saskatchewan, Devon, and Nisku followed, all of which were also before pay equity. With paid breaks and variable time values, many routes have now been pushed over 8-hours, ultimately making the time value on route Schedule A's more realistic compared to what they were before.

Restructures for RSMCs have always been led by the Corporation, but we did our best to hold the Corporation accountable and we customized the review procedure to provide a more thorough look at the Schedule A's. This included comparing routes once broken down into time, variable numbers, and points of call. We also took a thorough look at every Schedule A and noted errors in directions and wording as well as any values that were missing, such as kilometres and stop values.

One thing to note is that the Corporation refused to address time values for delivering in malls. RSMCs don't get pacing values like letter carriers, so there is no guarantee that routes delivering to malls are being paid properly.

The Corporation has made it clear that they are changing the method of restructuring RSMC routes. This is most likely due to the changes implemented

by the arbitrator. At this point, we will wait and see what 2020's restructures have to offer us – the only way to go is up, as the 2019 restructures proved themselves to be anything but good.

All in all, 2019 was a year of extreme highs and lows for RSMCs, and as we find ourselves in another January without a contract, we should remind ourselves what we are really fighting for. We haven't gotten here by sitting silent. 2018 ended with us being legislated back to work after more than a month of rotating strikes across Canada, but we stood together in solidarity. In 2019, we carried on that solidarity with each other in our local, fighting issues head on against the employer. We felt the impacts, good and bad, of pay equity. We fought through several restructures. We finally have paid breaks. We survived another year of unsafe working conditions during peak season.

Let's hope we don't have to do another Winter season without a contract. Here's to a good 2020. Happy New Year! 🇨🇦



*St. Albert Christmas sweater potluck.*

# PHOTO SUBMISSIONS



*Participants in January's Taking Back the Work Floor sessions.*



*December 21st, 2019: Coal for Kenney Rally.*



*Top, middle-right, and bottom: Moment of Silence observation at EMPP.*

# SHOP STEWARDS TARGETED AT DEPOT 2

## MANAGEMENT'S ACTIONS DENOUNCED BY EDMONTON POSTAL WORKERS

It's no secret that all of us at Depot 2 have been struggling. During the restructure in June 2019, CPC pretended our parcel volume grew 140% less than the national average in order to cut three jobs from an already overburdened workforce. We would have lost a forecasted nine routes if not for the entire city backing a demand letter for CPC to be transparent and value our work fairly.

Route restructures in the context of CPC's 'Make it Safe, Make it Home' campaign are a cruel joke. Prior to the restructure, 54 out of 70 routes were over-assessed (meaning the work value grew beyond an 8-hour day). Now, almost all of our routes are miraculously under-valued – but, as parcel growth keeps skyrocketing, still over-assessed.

If the restructure fraud and overburdening wasn't enough, imagine having to give at least an extra unpaid half-hour to CPC each day because they refused to provide parking. Our station has had inadequate parking ever since it was purchased, but we made it work by parking along the main road. Fast-forward to 2018: CPC gets notice that our entire facing road (124 avenue) would be torn up and all the street parking would be eliminated during construction and after construction was completed.

The thought of trudging 15-minutes through a construction zone without sidewalks, working overtime on an overburdened route, then stumbling back to our vehicles afterward was too much for us to bare. I'm disappointed it had to come to our entire station repeatedly confronting our managers but that is what it took for them to clue in to just how unsafe and unacceptable our situation was! A problem that CPC had over one year to find a solution to was addressed in the matter of a few days once we fought back. A mini-bus was contracted to shuttle us to and from the mail processing plant (EMPP) parking lot, about 5-minutes away, every 15-minutes.

Until CPC finds a new facility of adequate size with sufficient parking, the shuttle would be an acceptable

temporary measure. The story should have ended there, but the same thing that happens at the EMPP every December happened again: a lack of parking due to the army of casuals brought in to help with holiday volumes.

Now I don't know if this is a matter of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing or if CPC thought we hadn't suffered enough, but on December 12th, our superintendent told us at a staff talk that, effective December 13th, our shuttle would be moved to the fleet garage – a location 15-minutes away, if traffic cooperates. This presented a few problems that were immediately brought up from the floor: the shuttle would get stuck in traffic during those times and delay the transit intervals. How was CPC going to pay us for having to take extended shuttles? Why hadn't we been given more notice to make the necessary personal schedule adjustments?

The superintendent clearly became flustered throughout this exchange and claimed that parking wasn't CPC's responsibility and that the conversation was over. The superintendent then walked away despite our objections. Our two newest Shop Stewards, James and Kenton, insisted the work floor had the right to bring forward their complaints and followed the superintendent to say as much.

For exercising their rights, they were given notices of interview for violating the workplace code of conduct by being aggressive. Leading up to the interviews on December 17th, we circulated a petition vouching that we witnessed both Stewards being "respectful in representing the interests of the work floor." On the day of the interviews, the local President, Roland, the rest of the full-time officers, Todd, Carl, and Rashpal, and one of the EMPP Chief Shop Stewards, Cheryl, showed up to call a work floor meeting in the lunchroom.

As most of our wave of 40 employees squeezed in, Roland explained that CPC was unacceptably targeting James and Kenton and trying to stifle Depot 2's growing confidence. He said the union office

came to confront management about their behaviour and that if anyone else supported the efforts of these new Stewards, their presence and solidarity was very welcome. Everyone turned to James and Kenton and gave them a big round of applause – it was a genuinely touching moment.

We then waited while Roland went to get the managers. We'd later find out that the Zone Manager and station superintendent – the one who cut off the previous staff talk – said they had already addressed the parking issue and wouldn't be coming to our workers' meeting to do it again. When given the option of having the whole wave come to their office or join us in the lunchroom to hear our collective complaint, they reluctantly chose to come to the lunchroom.

On arrival, Roland presented the depot petition defending James and Kenton. The Zone Manager tried to talk us in circles but we were having none of it. For the next 30 or so minutes, we held our ground, calmly and forcefully giving voice about what had transpired over the last year. Members spoke of the changes they've had to make in their work-life balance to accommodate the parking shortfall and route restructure and how the sudden shift in the shuttle operations would impact their childcare needs and second jobs.

Many criticized the lack of transparency and overburdening and how, now, the job is so punishing that just one compressed flyer can result in days of delayed mail. No one held back and we made sure to let the Manager know he was there to listen and not make excuses. One sister received escalating applause for her proclamation of our right to collectively complain and her impassioned denunciation of the Manager for going after our Stewards for appropriately defending our interests.

We all supported and cheered on each others' testimonies and stated that it would be unacceptable for either Steward to be disciplined in any way. Once the dust settled, neither Kenton nor James received any discipline. Had we not stood together, I know this wouldn't have been the case. And management apologized for their lack

of communication and restored the original, more agreeable, shuttle plan.

Solidarity works!

This fight has been over a year in the making and it still isn't fully settled. No matter how many times CPC has kicked us down, we get back up. With each crisis, more of us get involved by taking union courses and supporting our Stewards and activists. No individual could have made a difference in these events alone, but by standing together we are all stronger. Whether it's a bully boss, a fraudulent restructure, or unpaid second trips for RSMCs, the fight isn't over – it's coming to a CPC facility near you if it hasn't already.

I hope our story has inspired you to organize yourselves and support one another when the time comes. ✈️

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By Carrie O'Parcelton





Rows of monos of unprocessed parcels. Above, a clock and a motto: Canada Post will be a world leader in providing innovative physical and electronic delivery solutions, creating value for our customers, employees, and all Canadians.

# COMING SOON TO A DEPOT NEAR YOU

## AN INVESTIGATION INTO DEPOT 2

### Introduction

On January 9th, some of us from the InsideOut Committee visited Depot 2. We had heard that things had not been so great since the restructure this past Summer, but we wanted to talk to the people who were living with the results of the Corporation's most recent fraudulent restructure.

But first, here's a quick recap. The Corporation's Route Optimization crew went into Depot 2 with the intention of cutting 9 routes. The numbers that CUPW's route measurement observers found suggested that, realistically, 3 routes should have been added to Depot 2. After the work floor mobilized and pushed back, the Corporation settled for cutting 3 routes. Management subsequently claimed that the decline in lettermail was not being made up for by the increase in parcel volumes, despite how much they like to brag about breaking old records and setting new ones each peak season.

To our surprise, however, talking to the workers at Depot 2 revealed that the damage done by the restructure is only one of three problems that is making working at Depot 2 feel unmanageable for many employees. These three problems are the parking situation, the length of routes after the restructure, and management.

### Parking at Depot 2

Since postal transformation was implemented and all of the routes at Depot 2 ended up needing corporate vehicles, parking has been an issue. After the parking spots were taken up by corporate vehicles, workers at Depot 2 had to contend for parking with the other businesses between 142nd and 149th street along 124th avenue. Multiple times due to construction, parking along 124th avenue was either minimal or impossible and after recent construction, additional turning lanes have made parking on 124th avenue no longer an option.

For months now, workers at Depot 2 have had to park at the EMPP and wait for a bus to transport them to their depot. At best, this adds 20-minutes of unpaid travel time to a worker's day. The fact that there is parking accommodation at all is a direct result of work floor organizing. Management was prepared to ignore the reality that employees would be walking for 10-minutes through a construction zone in order to get to the depot.

After some push back, management realized they might find themselves with a depot refusing unsafe work, so they agreed to the shuttle at the EMPP. This didn't stop management from threatening to eliminate the shuttle multiple times. Recently, the superintendent even claimed that parking is not the responsibility of the Corporation, which led to a confrontation with management. (See page 12.)

## Post-Restructure

For the most part, the new walks at Depot 2 seem to be unmanageable. Some carriers acknowledged that they have actually ended up with a better route than they had before the restructure, but they also see that this is certainly not the case for everyone. Of course, management likes to claim that all routes are created equal, but anyone who has spent time doing a different route every day knows this is not true.

According to one worker at Depot 2, the routes seem to have been designed so that there is no room for error: “You’re already not getting paid for a bunch of stuff on your route, so if anything is screwed up, it’s almost impossible... They’re now counting on you to take shortcuts to complete your daily tasks. The routes are designed for experienced carriers who are experienced at that route.”

Another carrier shares the following analysis: “These routes appear to be developed for the epitome of some WW2 vet – for people of a certain stature and fitness level. So an older employee who’s been around for 20-years and is showing wear and tear, or someone with health or mental health issues, or those with a shorter stride, are all at a disadvantage. Being tall with a long stride is not an advantage anymore – it’s a requirement.”

Because of this, many route owners are struggling to get their routes finished. Some have resigned themselves to the fact that the new normal is bringing mail back. An interim employee who has been doing month-long assignments for almost seven years told us that he was four days into a new assignment and had not yet finished the route, which was uncommon for this carrier.

Another carrier who has been with Canada Post for a decade said that it’s clear the routes have been structured to be optimized for a light day: “I’ve finished my route maybe 10 times in the last six months. I had over 90 parcels four times on a Monday before November. Lots of people end up bringing mail back. It takes a long time to clean up the mail after a long weekend.”

One carrier who expressed that her route was

generally fine also said that the amount of walking she has found herself doing has been leaving her exhausted: “I used to workout in the morning, but I haven’t been able to do that for months. I also don’t have the energy to go for a walk with my child or take her to the park.”

Other routes seem to have been improperly and unsafely designed: “The line of travel set up for my walk is ridiculous. There are a few of my businesses that don’t open until after 11 am, so I am having to go back to deliver or just skip them for the day, but they need their mail sometime during the week... I do [a retail postal outlet] clearance and I’ve been given a Transit to drive – unsafe to load at any dock, low dock is double the work as I have already moved the items twice to get from the depot and I need to handle them two more times. With the Transit, there have been days where I have had to go back to the depot for a second trip as the volumes were so high they couldn’t all fit at once.”

For new relief carriers, Depot 2 has shown itself to be an unforgiving place to work. Relief carriers are told by management to focus on delivering flyers, packets, and parcels. Based on what we’ve heard, the size and volume of routes means this is frequently all that relief carriers are able to get delivered. One relief carrier says, “There’s a walk I only finished once in two weeks. When you’re new, there are so many things to learn and practice. Some routes, especially with businesses and apartments... you need two people to finish.” Another relief carrier who started after the restructure shares a story of barely being able to get the flyer portion of the route done. A constant state of playing catch up combined with some health issues, this carrier says, leaves them feeling exhausted and stressed about not having the satisfaction of finishing a walk.

A more senior postal worker says that these new carriers are being set up for failure. “The new people feel like failures because they can’t get it done... so they come back and they’re like, ‘I can’t do this, I may have to look for another job because it’s impossible to finish’. And I keep telling the new people, ‘You’re set up for failure. If you were set up for success, it would be different. Try to look

to your coworkers for support to get through it because the Corporation certainly won't care."

For other carriers, overtime seems to be necessary to finish the routes. "Routes go unfinished because people aren't prepared to work the overtime," one carrier says, "But we shouldn't have to work the overtime." Another carrier echoed a similar point: "I took this job for quality of life, not for money – not because I wanted to work 10-hours per day."

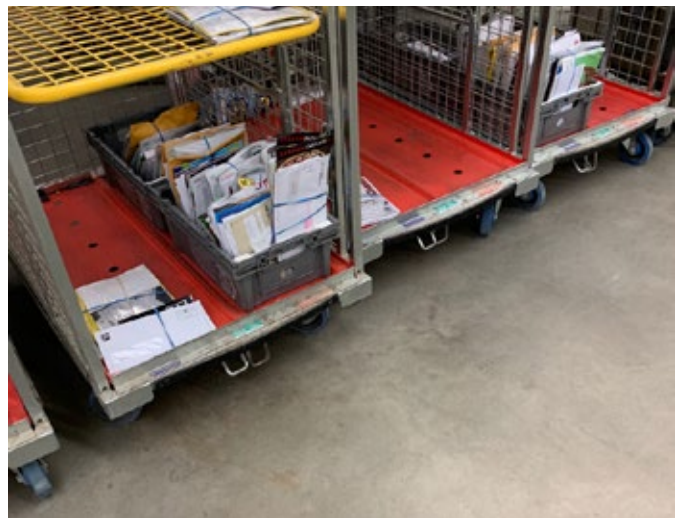
One carrier opted to work inside after the restructure for the sake of work-life balance. "...there's no life outside of Canada Post," she said, "I have suffered immensely. I've been on a [community mailbox] route, I've been on a business route, I've been on a long walk... and I have no energy outside of work... I don't even have the energy for, like, a yoga class – that would really help me, but I don't even have the energy to do that... We have a 25% injury rate and no other corporation, no other place, could operate like that. If a construction site had a 25% injury rate, they'd be shut down that day."

## Management

In the conversations at Depot 2 about routes being unmanageable and even among the workers who said their new routes were fine, there was a common thread that linked these grievances. The commonality was a failure by management to properly staff the routes or properly provide assistance when it was needed. Because of this, workers will end up having to do more than a day's work if they don't have the courage or don't feel supported in standing up to management, particularly staffing.

Sometimes, this complaint about management was covered as a complaint about relief carriers, but after doing some digging and asking some questions, the fact that things were not being staffed properly became clear: "Things aren't good. Routes are not being covered – you take a day off and the mail is piled high when you return."

A carrier who generally hasn't been struggling says, "This route is better than my old route. Taking a day off is the problem. Staffing keeps saying they



*End of aisle carts with undelivered mail due to overburdened routes is a common occurrence.*

don't have anyone to help. If you miss time, it's hard to catch up." And again, "There is a problem with staffing when it comes to getting help with routes. If you're not willing to stand up to staffing, you will get walked over."

Not surprisingly, this also extends to the RSMCs in the depot. We heard a story about an RSMC who came to to four days' worth of mail after being on vacation. When they asked for help, management's initial response was to tell the RSMC to just do it.

According to a route-owner, management doesn't care: "Management doesn't care what you deliver and staffing hasn't improved. It's an erosion in service, but they are motivated by greed. Our scanners don't work in the cold and sometimes you can't even plug in your vehicle properly..."

One activist at Depot 2 said that management seems to be functioning based on a two point checklist. One, does it cost money? Two, is anyone complaining? If the answer to both is no, then management seems to just look the other way. He continued, "Not sure if it's related to the contract situation or what, but we're not experiencing the same level of discipline that we used to. I was bringing back a portion every day and nothing was said to me. That was mostly a business walk, so I just had to answer to my customers and let them know I just didn't have time to get to them."




## Conclusion

We went to Depot 2 expecting to hear about the horrors of carriers struggling to make up for essentially 6 unacknowledged routes – three that were cut versus the three that should have been gained. While we did get those stories, we quickly found out that the situation at Depot 2 was compounded by the ongoing parking situation and by management's failure to properly staff routes that are overburdened.

Carriers initially mentioned the inability of relief carriers to finish the routes and how this led to them having to deal with multiple days' worth of mail, often for days at a time as they tried to catch up. A bit of digging and further questioning showed that the problem was actually with staffing and the routes not being staffed properly or assistance not being given to help clean up a route when it was needed. This, of course, ties back into the fraudulent restructure where time and parcel values seem to be completely fabricated and not reflect the work carriers are actually doing.

It is important to remember that it is the Corporation's and management's fault. Blaming each other for not being able to live up to these seemingly impossible standards does not help us and it does not help us build solidarity or build toward resisting fraudulent restructures in the future.

This is coming to a depot near you. Rosedale and Mayfield are next and these depots will have the exact same experience if there is no push back. Ultimately, it is up to us to decide which future we want for our depots.

With arbitration continuing to be dragged out and the keeping the threat of fines alive, it won't be an easy decision, but clearly we only have two options: we fight back or we continue to let the Corporation design routes that destroy our bodies. 

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*By the InsideOut Committee.*

# **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

## **FORMATION OF A COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE LOCAL ASSESSMENT AND FULL-TIME OFFICER WAGES**

AT THE DECEMBER 2019 GMM, IT WAS MOVED THAT A COMMITTEE BE FORMED TO INVESTIGATE OUR LOCAL ASSESSMENT (THE AMOUNT OF DUES WE PAY IN ADDITION TO THE AMOUNT SET BY NATIONAL) AND THE WAGES OF OUR FULL-TIME OFFICERS.

THE COMMITTEE IS TO CONSIST OF TWO (2) MEMBERS FROM GROUP 1, TWO (2) MEMBERS FROM GROUP 2, TWO (2) RSMCS, AND TWO (2) FULL-TIME OFFICERS. VOLUNTEERS FOR THIS COMMITTEE TO BE SOLICITED THROUGH THE INSIDEOUT.

WORK ON THIS PROJECT IS TO BE COMPLETED BY THE COMMITTEE  
BY **JULY 2020**

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT SECRETARY-TREASURER TODD BROOKS AT  
[TREASURER@CUPWEDM.NET](mailto:TREASURER@CUPWEDM.NET)

# A PICKET LINE IS A PICKET

## A REFLECTION ON LABOUR TACTICS AND SOLIDARITY

By Greg Mady, EDLC President

As postal workers, unfortunately we are not strangers to a picket line. We know all too well how important morale is in keeping our spirits up as we fight an unjust employer. We also know that the world of work is changing so rapidly and our tactics seem to be changing at a dizzying pace as we attempt to adjust to this new world.

The first article of our National Policies reads:

### **A. THE STRUGGLE OF CUPW AGAINST THE EMPLOYER**

#### ***A-1. Picket Lines and Industrial Action***

*Since all of the struggles of the Union ultimately depend on the solidarity and collective action of postal workers against the employer, the Union will take all necessary steps to ensure that workers who participate on picket lines in accordance with National Policies will not be penalized.*

*Additionally, the Union shall endorse the principle that “a picket line is a picket line” and shall instruct its members as to trade union principles with respect to honouring picket lines.*

Honouring a picket line on the surface means not crossing picket lines while we are working in order to show our solidarity with the workers fighting for a fair deal at their job site. Everybody knows we have a union and to see fellow union workers refuse to cross and show their support goes a long way for everyone involved. We also need to take these actions into our personal lives and into our conversations with friends and family – and, hell, even strangers!

Currently, Co-Op Refinery workers in Regina, who are pretty much solely responsibly for supplying gas to Co-Op gas bars, are using rotating strikes to educate drivers on the issues and encouraging them to get their gas elsewhere. Not only must



*CUPW members supporting locked out Co-Op Refinery workers on a picket line in Edmonton.*

we respect these lines when they are up, but we should also respect them when they are not. Due to the nature of this lockout and job action and the employer demanding rollbacks from their workers, this is simply not acceptable and we shouldn't participate in their attempts to undermine what their workers deserve.

This is an important lesson as we head into the next session of the UCP legislature. It is not a stretch to conceive of picket lines sprouting up all over our province, and as postal workers we will be faced with the decision to support other unions and refuse to cross picket lines as we carry out our day-to-day activities.

This is the first and most crucial step we must take in our collective fight. Hopefully the next step will result in us joining them as we refuse to work under the unjust conditions being forced on all of us across the country! 🇨🇦

# SOLIDARITY STYLE OFFICIAL CUPW 730 T-SHIRTS



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**pink  
t-shirt  
day**

## **February 27th is Anti-Bullying Day.**

**Bullying can take many forms, including sarcasm, unwanted sexual comments, spreading rumours, humiliation, and physical aggression.**

**A pink t-shirt is worn has a been worn as a sign of solidarity with survivors of bullying since 2007. It was chosen after Chuck McNeill was bullied for wearing a pink t-shirt to school.**

**Show solidarity with survivors of bullying and take a stand against bullying by wearing a pink t-shirt on February 27th.**