

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF CUPW 730 / SEPTEMBER 2021

INSIDE OUT

"BEST SUMMER EVER" EDITION

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

SEPTEMBER 30

Our Local would like to acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional meeting grounds, gathering place, and travelling route to the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene and Nakota Sioux. We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries.

INSIDEOUT is the monthly publication of the Edmonton Local of CUPW.

This newsletter aspires to educate and inform members and affiliates about our union's activities, opportunities, and challenges, as well as to raise awareness regarding all things labour.

Opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily the official views of the Local.

The Communications Committee (responsible for this publication) is always interested in submissions of original articles, photographs, or illustrations. Prospective material must always concern CUPW or the labour movement, but submissions of general interest to the membership will also be considered.

We will also publish Letters to the Editor should you feel an issue requires further discussion. All submissions are subject to editing for brevity, clarity, etc.

To make a submission, or to get involved, contact the Communications Committee at communications730@gmail.com.

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EMPOWER ORGANIZE RESIST

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2021

THE MEMBERSHIP IS ALWAYS RIGHT

The contract extension proposal has concluded with the YES vote winning. A big thank you to all the members that contributed their time to the democratic process of our union. The more of us that get involved and informed, the stronger we all are collectively. Regardless of outcome, this experience has provided our union with many important lessons.

When the extension proposal was first announced, our local executive decided we would oppose the National Executive Board (NEB) recommendation because we felt it was strategically shortsighted and it undermined the ultimate authority of our membership. We had no illusions about the long odds we faced to succeed but primarily wanted to use the opportunity to make our case on what a union should be, to pressure the NEB to develop more of an organizing strategy, and to find other allies across the country who also believe that CUPW needs to be drastically reformed. As expected, we lost the vote but accomplished our other objectives. Thank you to all those that had the courage to demand accountability from a leadership group that went completely unchallenged in most other locals.

CUPW In Crisis

Within the next two weeks the audited vote results will be released breaking down the totals for each local. I suspect these totals will show that

participation was lower than the 2016 extension turnout (25%) and that anywhere the NO campaign was active the NO vote was substantially higher than where it wasn't presented. Regardless how you voted, this is important information to consider for two main reasons:

Sentiment: When our local conducted a referendum back in September 2019 on whether or not we should adopt a strategy to defy back-to-work legislation, both sides of the debate were detailed and it was made very clear that there was no desired vote outcome or recommendation. The reason it was presented this way was because it would not benefit our local to build a strategy based on members making decisions after only hearing one side of the argument. The same logic should be considered for the extension vote.

If, as expected, the NO vote performed better where it was given equal opportunity to make their recommendation, what does that say about the strength of the YES argument and how members actually feel when presented a full picture? By not allowing a counter-perspective to be offered to all locals, the NEB robbed itself of a more accurate sense of how membership actually felt and what we were willing to do. Without gauging proper sentiment, we are building a plan based on wishful thinking not solid information. This is especially dangerous as a labour union because

the only real leverage we have is the certainty, not speculation, of the mass willingness of our members to act collectively.

Engagement: This vote had serious implications for the future of our jobs. That likely less than 25% of our members could be encouraged to participate reflects a critical communication and credibility problem with our union, at every level, in every local, including our own. A crisis in belief in the union is not the fault of the member but of our union in failing to give the member something to believe in and engage with, and it is our responsibility to win them back.

With such a low level of engagement the only constructive conclusion that can be drawn about this vote is that an overwhelming majority of our members do not believe in the union enough to be involved and that there was no mass support for either extension choice. Again, a union without an active membership has no leverage to accomplish anything, let alone actually making our jobs better.

Building A Ground Game

The results of this vote should raise concerns for every union supporter participating in the extension, YES or NO, because it shows just how weak CUPW has become. Hopefully, this alarmingly low turnout is the wakeup call needed to convince more locals and other levels of the union to change

course. The NO campaign was very successful in getting the NEB to centre the importance of organizing to re-engage members and the need to develop capacity over the next two years. Whether those NEB platitudes were sincere or not, this bell cannot be unrung, and it is now open season to relentlessly apply pressure on our elected union officials until satisfaction is delivered on this promise.

Either this organization develops a serious plan to build a workforce presence and collectively empower every single local over the next two years or I fear CUPW will be past saving. We are quickly running out of time to reclaim the legacy we love to reminisce about. Expanding services into public postal banking, internet and food delivery will be the only things that secure our future. Make no mistake, we will never win these expansions without a strike, and no strike will be successful without an actual plan to face down back-to-work legislation. If we are expecting to survive another 15-20 years at this job on soon-to-be-extinct letter mail and low-profit-margin parcels without embracing the reality of the fight ahead, we are in for a rude awakening. If we are to survive and flourish, our union must change how it fights.

Fortunately, the blueprint for effective labour unionism has been around for over 100 years and is only as far away as our willingness to utilize it:

1. Mass Recruitment: When we initiated frequent workforce meetings in Edmonton & area back in 2019, the reception was not friendly. We couldn't clear most workfloors to participate, and those attending were more interested in criticizing union officers for being absent rather than hearing what was on offer. By about the third round of visits, we started winning members around

to the sincerity of our efforts and drawing near full attendance.

These meetings were not just for the sake of showing our face or sharing news; each meeting made the case that the union was only as strong as our members are involved and would directly invite members to specific organizing educationals and events. It cannot be stated enough just how much more interest is generated in taking a training course from delivering persistent, workforce appeals instead of mailing out a bulletin or making a website post.

'A crisis in belief in the union is not the fault of the member but of our union in failing to give the member something to believe in and engage with, and it is our responsibility to win them back.'

If the NEB is serious about building capacity, they can start by interviewing workforce representatives from each local to get an honest evaluation of what they think of their execs, how often, if at all, the local actually runs organizer training sessions, and where union communication and involvement breakdowns occur. This can be further supported by a survey of all members on what the union can do better to improve as well as forming a nation-wide task force made up of local leaders enthusiastic about building a national organization strategy.

2. Mass Education: The main reason our union is weak is because it reinforces a top-down

procedural mode of activism which is not only ineffective but discourages our members from committing to the struggle. For example: if the company does something wrong, the main way activists have been trained to fight back is to obey in the moment, collect paperwork, and file a grievance later. The infraction then becomes a matter of some legal proceedings months or years down the road. This process was designed to displace frustration and demoralize workers by keeping them from directly fighting back to confront their problems.

The antidote to this is deliberately, and persistently, training and empowering workers to collectively organize their own workfloors to demand change. Like anything, this skillset is not a spontaneous switch that can be flicked on at will, but must be taught widely in order to be effective. Beyond building confidence and capacity, mass workforce organizer training is the invitation to inspire our members of the potential of the union and why they should believe in the struggle. This advocacy, more than anything else, is the reason we've seen more involvement in our local on every front and why so many new members are getting involved. There is a direct correlation between how many workforce meetings and organizer training courses we have, and the amount of members wanting to be involved in the union.

If the NEB is serious about preparing our members to fight back and succeed, every local not already investing heavily in organizer training will need encouragement from other levels of the union to get started. The

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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NEB had plenty of time to spread out between every region and local to sell this contract extension. Now, they can make good on their claims of wanting to prepare our members over the next two years by spending that time meeting with local execs to help convince and support them in budgeting, and deploying, workforce organizer training courses.

3. Perpetual Support: The Building Power To Win (BPW) campaign initiated by the NEB last year was a lesson on how campaigns need proper resources to succeed. When it started I told our local coordinators that, although it was not likely to receive the support it needed, it had good ideas that we should push as far as possible. In hindsight, as under-supported as the BPW campaign was, it didn't fully derail until the NEB agreed to private talks with CPC about the extension. Whether intended or not, this drastic shift created a lot of ill-will with activists who extended their trust to the NEB to help with this campaign.

A political leadership group is only as good as the sincerity of their claims and efforts to follow-through on those claims. If the NEB doesn't

believe in empowering workfloors, fine, they should be honest about that and tell members the only thing they have to offer are arbitrations and court appeals. If they do believe, however, they must spare no expense or effort to develop a strategy to invest, at

“Either this organization develops a committed plan to build a workforce presence and collectively empower every single local over the next two years or I fear CUPW will be past saving. We are quickly running out of time to reclaim the legacy we love to reminisce about.”

minimum, just as many resources into organizing coordinators and trainers as they do grievance worker advocates.

BPW has tremendous potential value and should be reset and expanded with members applying for organizing coordinator positions in every region and large local. The scope of this campaign should also grow beyond mapping and surveying workfloors to also recruiting and training workforce activists. Once trained, liaisons should be coordinated into region-

wide organizing committees so that locals can support each other's cross-actions and mini-cross-campaigns. Want to fight SSD, a bad restructure, or force CPC to give us proper Group 1 staffing data? Imagine training and empowering multiple locals to coordinate job actions together to do just that. No more waiting every four years to solve our problems at bargaining; the time between can be the necessary battles where we refine our gameplan, and build up our confidence so when we do get back to negotiating public service expansion we have the means and credibility to fully see it through.

Every one of these steps can be put into motion as early as this October if our NEB leadership is sincere in their claims to properly preparing our membership. If the NEB is committed to revitalizing this union, our local will be one of the first to enthusiastically support that direction. That said, we will not be waiting to see what develops. We've long known what it will take for this union to win and we will do our part by leading by example and encouraging and supporting any other locals committed to doing the work that needs to be done. Let's get to it. 



ROLAND SCHMIDT
(HE/HIM)
PRESIDENT
CUPW 730

GOING FORWARD AFTER THE CONTRACT EXTENSION VOTE:

WE'RE ONLY DELAYING THE INEVITABLE

We may have bought some time, but peace is not a win: and if we want to win this game, we—all of us—have to participate in it

Devon Rundvall (he/him), 1st VP of Organizing CUPW 730

What does the contract extension mean when it comes to the next two years? It means we have a lot of work ahead of us. It means that instead of getting concrete language in the contract, we now have a few more grievances and committees discussing the real life problems postal workers face every day. It means that in two years the reluctance to strike will be greater because household finances are going to be even tighter than they are today. It will mean that many postal workers will be working harder and in worse conditions than today.

We could have used this negotiation to improve the lives of postal workers and Canadians across the country. But instead we were told to vote 'yes' and buy two years of labour peace. At least our national leadership finally disclosed the reality of the contract. It wasn't in the vote presentations, but you could find it on the second page of the results bulletin.

After two months of telling postal workers how good this offer was and the great things offered in it, reality hits: "We have the tools to fight for more full-time regular positions in Group 1... We will need to organize and fight-back against CPC's efforts to

impose SSD, and we have to address the health and safety issues associated with the double bundle delivery method."

For years I've been telling people that no one from National is coming to save us. We have to do the work ourselves. This contract extension has shown this to be the right analysis.

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If you are reading this, you are at least somewhat invested in seeing things change at Canada Post. But you may also be feeling a level of apathy or uselessness. After reading posts and hearing some defeated comments from my coworkers, I feel it too.

But there is hope. Unions have been through incredibly more difficult times than this. They generally follow the same steps to win: Agitate, Educate, and Organize. This is our strategy and it starts on the work floor with you.

Agitate: Talk to your coworkers. Let them know that they are not the only one upset about the way the place is run. Show them that the negative

emotions they feel are because of management's complete disregard for their rights and dignity.

Educate: Attend educationals put on by the Local and Regional offices. Encourage your coworkers to attend them as well. Learn about the history of labour. There are endless books and podcasts describing the struggle that we have faced as workers over the last two hundred years. From the Triangle Shirt Riots to Memory and Muscle, learn our history. See what we had to go through to get what we have today, then share what you learned!

Organize: Get involved. Attend GMMs, join a committee, start a work floor group to stand up to management. Reach out to a Shop Steward and see what they need help with. There are a multitude of ways you can get involved, from yelling at the boss to helping with a potluck. We win through solidarity and we grow solidarity by getting involved. 

ROUTE MEASUREMENT BY THE NUMBERS

ON DEMAND PICK UPS

Warren Melnyk

It should come as no surprise that the Corporation doesn't follow its own rules when it comes to our jobs and workers are left to pick up the slack. Rules around on demand pick ups have become a big concern. Warren Melnyk shares some insight into how we got here and what we can do about it.

To understand our current situation with on demand pick ups, we need a bit of history of where they came from. Scheduled and on demand pick ups were always a structured part of a Mail Service Courier (MSC) route. Part of their work day was delivering relay bags and oversized parcels for letter carrier routes. The rest of the day was clearing retail postal outlets (RPOs), street letter boxes (SLBs), scheduled customer pick ups, and "unassigned time" for doing on demand pick up requests and parcel (PCI) delivery.

Unassigned time is the key point where MSC routes had an allowance for a block of paid time in their work day that was divided into operational flex time and unused scheduled time. Every pick up route had a minimum block of operational flex time that satisfied operational requirements.

When CPC management merged the MSC work with the newly-motorized Letter Carrier routes, they completely ignored the process as previously established in their own restructure manuals. As a result, they continuously

repeated that this work would be done by 15.08, referring to the article of the Urban Operations contract that deals with overtime on your own assignment. As a result, we have what we see today where Letter Carriers are expected to just fit this work into their day without a structured time value. This is forced OT in some cases, and it causes some carriers to believe that they need to skip breaks in order to finish their routes on time.

Only recently has this started to change. Depot 2 and Delton are the only two depots in the Edmonton area that have a more accurate number of on demand pick ups. However, no depot has any routes with a proper pick up window with flex time to help with management's operational requirements. Even worse than this is how most management believe they can simply assign pick ups to any routes they want. This completely violates chapters 8 and 5 of their own manuals and forces 15.08 OT on whoever they see fit.

The structuring of routes is very clearly defined by CPC. Some routes have more delivery and parcels, some have RPO clearances and SLBs, and a few others have customer pick ups. However, only routes with scheduled pick ups can be assigned on demand pick ups, as written by CPC management in the Letter Carrier Route Measurement System manual's Chapter 8 and the Mobile Service Courier manual Chapter 5.

Clearly it's not an ideal situation. The only recourse has been for experienced members in a restructure to object to the plans of Route

Optimization Officers (RMOs), who continue to violate our Collective Agreement and their own processes in order to cut the number of routes and maximize their bonuses. It's a slow process, but our Local union officers have been able to affect change by bringing these concerns to the final restructure consultation and ultimately filing grievances.

An alternative would be having Letter Carriers en masse understand how this work should be structured. It is not through 15.08 forced OT. If a route has scheduled pick ups and on demand time allowance on their form 108, then they must do the pick ups as assigned. It is important to note that with these routes, new pick ups may be created and others moved or no longer required, but this work should be confined to the pick up routes as structured.

However, routes without scheduled pick ups clearly have not been structure with any time for on demand pick ups (Chapter 5 of the MSCWSS, page 7) and as a result they should consider declining the assignment and making it clear that they are a delivery and not a pick up route. Use your Right to Complain and have a Shop Steward to witness and assist.

A united membership who use the structured process to clearly express management's lack of foresight to accommodate the customers' pick up requests, especially when they offer the free pick up service in the Fall, can greatly affect the ongoing national policy grievance on this matter that is slowly moving through the arbitration process. 

FROM THE GRIEVANCE OFFICE

ARTICLE 10 AND DISCIPLINE

Elizabeth Smallwood (she/her),
Grievance Officer CUPW 730

1. You have the right to have a Shop Steward present for all requested interactions with management – formal and informal.

2. If you believe your personal file has discipline from the past, it's important that you request your personal file in writing prior to the meeting and that you and your Shop Steward review your file prior to the meeting. If there is anything older than 12 months, the Corporation must remove it from your file (10.02 (c)). If your file is not there before the interview, you have the substantive right under 10.04 (b) to refuse to participate in the interview.

3. Any report must be placed in the personal file within 10 days of any alleged infraction. For Urban Operations, the time limit is 10-calendar days. For RSMCs, it is 10

working days (weekends don't count).

4. If you receive less than 24-hours' notice for an interview, or if the notice is too vague, then you (with your Shop Steward) should refuse to participate in the interview. If you do proceed with the interview anyway, you are waiving your rights under Article 10.04 and you are unable to use the lack of information or failure to provide 24 hours as reasons to throw the discipline out. The Corporation will threaten to proceed unilaterally, but if this leads to discipline, that discipline has been successfully fought. Cases involving the personal file not being present frequently win when put in front of an arbitrator.

5. A friendly reminder that it is important to file a grievance about all discipline and letters on file (including letters of expectation, non-disciplinary letters, and frequently injured letters). 



EDUCATION UPDATE



James Ball (he/him), Education Officer
CUPW 730

Education is a cornerstone of any organization. CUPW 730 is no different, and is committed to educating its members. While this pandemic has increased our access to print and online media, as with our Local's amazing newsletter, The InsideOut, and our weekly Local Dispatches, it has almost completely stopped our ability to host formal educationals.

During a relaxed period of restriction, we did manage a few half-sized versions of the Basic and Advanced Shop Steward training classes. They were awkward affairs, though, as many of the courses are designed with direct participation as a keystone and require frequent group work that just wasn't possible. Still, the classes were ultimately productive and many new stewards were sworn-in over Zoom, amidst a cacophony of open mics, during our GMMs.

Vaccination rates were rising when I optimistically went about planning the fall/winter education schedule. Now, with Alberta hospitals forced by bad leadership into performing triage, choosing who gets treated based on expected chance of survival over 12 months, I am forced to concede that we will not be having classes in person in the near future.

The education committee with the support of the Executive board and the other committees will be examining options for late winter and spring educationals. The newly elected committee members have some work ahead of them.

I would like to welcome Devon Rundvall, Wendy Crispin, Natasha Fryzuk, Roger Chau, and Jeremy Rusten to the education Committee. 

ATTACK ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AT THE EMPP

Posthumous honours for a toxic boss an insult to women workers and a sign of callous disregard for their safety

Kathleen Mpulubusi (she/her), CUPW Women's Committee

Recently at the Edmonton Mail Processing Plant (EMPP), CPC management decided to put up a memorial plaque and rename the Situation Room to the "Sly Sleiman Situation Room," in memory of Sly Sleiman, an EMPP superintendent who passed away in December 2020. Many documented cases of bullying and harassment towards women were permitted to occur under Sleiman's supervision.

The Local Women's Committee initially wrote a letter to complain about this issue, but we still feel that the ongoing toxic work atmosphere against women needs to be addressed by management. We will be sending the following revised letter to demand that work be done to address this issue.

We, the Women's Committee of the CUPW Edmonton Local, are formally complaining about the past and ongoing toxic work environment that exists for women working at the EMPP. We are glad to see that management did act quickly to remove the memorial plaque honouring the late Sly Sleiman and revert the naming of the Situation Room after complaints were made. However, the fact that management considered the idea at all shows the lack of understanding and disrespect shown towards women workers in the plant.

"Under Sly's supervision there was documented bullying and sexual harassment of several women in the plant. He allowed and promoted a toxic culture of harassment and intimidation to continue by ignoring and not acting on complaints that were brought forward. There is a current arbitration on this matter which is awaiting an arbitrator's decision, which made the decision to memorialize particularly shortsighted

and egregious. More recently, there have been complaints about supervisors denying women access to the bathroom to deal with period issues and ongoing issues of accommodation of pregnant workers.

"We therefore ask that CPC management work to address the ongoing treatment of women workers in the plant so that all feel safe and respected in their work. There appears to be a need for education of direct supervisors and management on women's rights in the workplace. We would be willing to meet with CPC management and discuss how this can be addressed so that there truly can be a workplace free from harassment and bullying.

Yours truly,

The CUPW Edmonton Local Women's Committee"



AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL CITY COUNCIL AND MAYORAL CANDIDATES

To the hopeful and eager City Council and Mayoral candidates vying for a position representing Edmontonians in the upcoming municipal election, I know all of you are brave. To put yourselves out there in the public eye, under the scrutiny of opposition and media, all to commit yourselves to making Edmonton a better city than we can even imagine today. Thank you for taking the first step in this adventure.

But I have a secret to share with you. On the unofficial behalf of those who call the City of Edmonton home – excluding, of course, anyone who finds the following disagreeable for its honesty – your campaign is boring. We have yet to hear anything new. We have thus far been underwhelmed. It's about as appetizing as last night's leftover meatloaf. That I cooked from a box. Without pizzazz or flair. Just boring.

Here we are, in 2021, trying with all of our might to put the largest global pandemic in 100-years behind us while governments look to slash public funding for social programs and wages of frontline workers; with increasing accounts of sexual misconduct against mostly women within our military, committed by mostly men that we have, in the past, chosen to honour and award for their integrity and bravery; and the uncovering of mass graves containing the remains of hundreds of Indigenous children

kidnapped from their families for the admitted purpose of cultural genocide on the party of our 'government' and 'church.'

...And the best you've got is 'your time to get ahead'? Geez, with that kind of creativity, I'm surprised I haven't seen a "Make Edmonton Great Again" t-shirt and ball cap combo.

Why is it that you are avoiding the issues that affect us most? Is it because they are viewed as federal or provincial issues? Not something that a city of 1,500,000 should wade into? Are the higher levels of government

"It's time to be bold... Candidates, please dream big."

doing such a great job addressing and righting these wrongs that we are able to sit back and focus our attention more on 'local problems,' like changes to our recycling systems? Are we scared or just intimidated to get near such huge beasts?

There are countries and cities out there doing amazing things. A solar project in Vulcan County here in Alberta is in the works, and it is slated to be able to generate enough power for more than 12,000 homes. And those numbers get a whole lot bigger according to some proponents of the project. Pretty good for a county with a population of about 4,000, eh?

It's time to be bold, candidates. The state of the world, our country, our province, and especially our Edmonton

requires it. It's time to get serious and specific about what 'getting ahead' really means. Does it mean no child goes to school hungry by implementing a standardized school lunch program, thus setting them up for complete cognitive function later in life? That sounds like getting ahead to me.

Or maybe it looks like eradicating homelessness in Edmonton. With rental vacancies much higher now than in the past, it seems a sin that bedrooms sit vacant while our brothers, sisters, and cousins freeze or swelter on the streets from one season to the next. Or maybe it looks like more local foods in more local stores, creating a more stable market for farmers' goods; getting more nutrient-dense foods into the mouths of Edmontonians by lessening the amount of travel needed to get food on our plate; while also helping to ensure food security for our growing population, which is set to hit 2-million by 2050.

This is what 'getting ahead' looks like to me. It looks like thinking big and talking about important issues when no one else seems to be. It is true bravery. Candidates, please dream big. Please help re-awaken our vibrancy and tenacity. And please, for the love of this great city we call home, be interesting.

Sincerely yours in the journey to make Edmonton a destination, not just a stop along the way; a place to build a life, not just a house; to make better today what we think we have time to do tomorrow,

Laura L. Dawson

CANADIAN POSTAL WORKERS ARE SHOWING US WHAT CLASS-STRUGGLE UNIONISM LOOKS LIKE

By Paul Prescod

Reprinted from Jacobinmag.com
September 2, 2021

From fighting contract concessions to making common-good demands like postal banking and public broadband, Canadian postal workers' fighting unionism should be an inspiration to USPS workers.

In 2020, the United States Postal Service (USPS) came under heavy fire from would-be privatizers, starting a fight that isn't over yet. But contentious battles over the future of the postal service are not restricted to the United States. In Canada, rank-and-file postal workers are carrying on a proud history, both distant and recent, of class struggle within the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW).

Ferment within the CUPW rank and file has coalesced around a campaign to reject a two-year contract extension with Canada Post. The offer would include a 2 percent per year wage increase. Online voting on the agreement began on August 3 and will end on September 3.

While the CUPW National Executive Board (NEB) is encouraging members to vote yes, locals in St. John's, Halifax, Moncton, Toronto, Edmonton, and Winnipeg see the agreement as a step backward and have recommended no votes. These locals point out that none

of the union's core concerns about pay disparity, two-tier wage systems, and work rules are addressed in this agreement.

A statement from the Halifax local highlighted how a 2 percent wage increase merely continues the decline in postal workers' real wages:

While that may sound acceptable, it needs to be kept in context. Our past wage increases have not kept up with the rate of inflation which has resulted in a loss of purchasing power. All you have to do is look at the rising costs of fuel, food and lumber to see how the purchasing power of all postal workers continues to decline.

CUPW Local 730 in Edmonton said, "We should not accept any wage proposal that does not also seek to eliminate the two-tier system." The local argues that the proposal does nothing to advance the union's more ambitious community-wide aims, such as postal banking:

Our members voted for a public postal bank staffed by CUPW members, not to subsidize big banks to use our infrastructure for their benefit after they abandoned rural communities. This development will make it harder to establish a postal bank, not easier.

Besides the bread-and-butter shortcomings, many within the union also resent what they view as a violation of the union's democratic processes. The push for the contract extension, they said, has been done in

an accelerated fashion and without the normal collective bargaining procedures.

An Atlantic Region CUPW representative expressed his frustration when he wrote, "The NEB agreed to these tentative agreements before the regional conferences for the membership's demands were completed and before a national program of those demands could be compiled and presented to the membership and then the employer."

Whatever the outcome of the vote, it's clear that a significant portion of the membership has not bought into this agreement. The infrastructure of this "Vote No" campaign could be leveraged for more ambitious fights to save the Canadian postal service in the coming years. If so, it would only be building on a rich history of struggle within the union.

A History of Struggle

The CUPW has a proud, militant tradition and a reputation for connecting their fights to broader social issues. In 1974, it won equal pay for the mostly women postal-code machine operators with a boycott and national strike. It became the first federal union to win paid maternity leave in 1981 with a strike lasting forty-two days.

In more recent years, the union has focused its energy on fighting privatization schemes and expanding



Rank-and-file postal workers are carrying on a proud history of class struggle within the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. (Andrew Lahodinskyj / Toronto Star via Getty Images)

the social role of the postal service. It has demonstrated a refreshing ability to be proactive and visionary in defense of a vital public service.

In 2010, as Canada Post's financial problems worsened and whispers of privatization gathered steam, the CUPW released its vision document called "The Future of Canada Post." In it, the union criticizes the turn to automation and rank-and-file postal workers are carrying on a proud history of class struggle within the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. (Andrew Lahodinskyj / Toronto Star via Getty Images) workforce reduction as a way to increase financial viability. Instead, CUPW puts forward its own ideas for how the postal service can increase revenue while providing necessary public services, like postal banking and public internet.

Back in 2010, Canadian postal workers launched one-day strikes in opposition to dangerous speed-up

measures that led to an increase in on-the-job injuries. CUPW's "Save Canada Post" campaign in 2015 gained widespread public support for improved service measures like restoring home mail delivery.

In 2018, the union again used a tactic of rotating one-day strikes to gain leverage during contract negotiations. Under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Canada's Parliament forced postal workers back to work with the Postal Services Resumption and Continuation Act, which imposed fines on the union and individual workers who refused to go back.

Delivering Community Power

The CUPW has managed to seize the initiative by tying its internal contract concerns to a broader, more expansive vision of what the postal service could be. The union's transformative proposals were introduced to the public in 2016 under the banner of "Delivering Community Power" (DCP).

The plan is ambitious, seeking to address a wide array of issues like financial inclusion, eldercare, and climate change.

The CUPW has long championed postal banking, which existed in Canada until 1968. The DCP plan clearly lays out the stakes of the proposition:

Today, there are over 1,200 rural communities with post offices but no banks or credit unions. And only 54 of 615 Indigenous communities are served by local bank branches. 2 million Canadians rely on predatory payday lenders for basic financial services.

With over six thousand postal outlets, "Canada Post could overnight become the most accessible bank in the country." Besides bringing more financial justice, "revenues raised by postal banking could help pay for new

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CANADIAN POSTAL WORKERS ARE SHOWING US

(continued from previous page)

expanded services.” The DCP plan also envisions a role for postal banking in the battle to halt climate change, proposing that postal banks “deliver government loans, grants and subsidies to boost renewable energy projects and energy-saving retrofits.”

The DCP plan proposes that the post office serve as a vehicle for a wide array of services beyond banking. For example, it recommends adapting post offices to provide broadband internet, “extending high-speed internet service farther than the big for-profit telecoms are willing to go.” Post offices could also serve as community hubs, providing meeting spaces for youth, seniors, and other local organizations.

CUPW also believes that postal workers, as public servants who interact daily with ordinary people, have a role to play in eldercare. The DCP plan suggests that workers:

could be allotted extra time on their routes to check in on seniors or people with mobility issues who sign up for the service. Check-ins could be as simple as seeing if there’s a regular “ok” sign in the window or a brief social visit. Postal workers could also become a point of contact between seniors and healthcare or social services when the need arises.

Sustainability is front and center in DCP. As the effects of climate change seem to worsen by the day, all approaches will be needed in the shift to renewable energy. The CUPW

outlines a plan for post offices to become “hubs for the new green economy.”

In addition to using public banking to advance renewables, the DCP plan proposes that post offices provide public electric charging stations, which would also increase public confidence in electric vehicles (EVs). As the document points out, “While electric vehicle prices have fallen dramatically over the past few years, one important barrier to widespread adoption of EVs is lack of consumer confidence in the

“The infrastructure of this “Vote No” campaign could be leveraged for more ambitious fights to save the Canadian postal service in the coming years. If so, it would only be building on a rich history of struggle within the union.”

availability of public charging stations.”

The Canada Post fleet of vehicles could be all electric, and post office buildings retrofitted for energy efficiency. The union also wants the postal service to “bring farm-to-table food delivery to doorsteps across the country, helping to sustain local farms while expanding access to fresh foods.”

In articulating an ambitious vision for the role of the postal service in DCP and campaigning among the public for it, Canadian postal workers are laying the groundwork for the broad coalition that will be needed to stave off privatization.

The Future of USPS

In the United States, postal workers and their allies should take inspiration from the path being laid in Canada, on display in both the ambitious DCP plan and the current rank-and-file-led opposition to the contract offer.

In summer 2020, in the lead-up to the presidential election, there was an outpouring of public support for USPS as it came under attack by Donald Trump-appointed postmaster general Louis DeJoy. Mobilizations helped to stave off the worst of his plans to destroy and eventually privatize mail service.

However, the fate of USPS is still very much uncertain. DeJoy still runs the postal service with the backing of the postal board of governors, a nine-person bipartisan body. Six members of the board are Trump appointees, with only three appointed by Joe Biden.

In March 2021, DeJoy released a ten-year plan for USPS that would cut post office hours, lengthen delivery times, and increase postage rates. If implemented, the plan would drastically decrease the quality of service and the public’s confidence in the postal service, thus fertilizing the ground for privatization.

The only way to defeat this push is to offer our own expansive countervision of the role USPS can play in the twenty-first century. Our brothers and sisters in the CUPW are proving that this is both possible and necessary.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Prescod is a high school social studies teacher and member of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers.

CUPW 730 CITY COUNCIL ENDORSEMENTS

At our September 11, 2021 GMM the membership voted in favour of endorsing two pro-labour candidates, Cori Longo and Glyniss Leib, who are running for council in the upcoming municipal election. At a previous GMM, our own Health and Safety Officer, Brother Rashpal Sehmy, also sought and won our endorsement. More details are available on each of the candidates’ respective websites.

CORI LONGO FOR WARD MÉTIS

Cori is a former postal worker and former nurse with a strong labour background. She is a mom and strong community advocate who currently works with the Canadian Labour Congress here in Edmonton.

<https://www.coriforcouncil.com/>



GLYNNIS LEIB FOR WARD IPIHKOOHKANIPIAHTSI

Glyniss is a community leader and advocate. She is a social psychologist and has worked for both government and not-for-profit social services as a post-secondary instructor and on behalf of working Albertans. She is a tireless long-time volunteer for a variety of local events and organizations.

<https://www.glynnislieb.com/>



RASHPAL SEHMY FOR WARD SSPOMITAPI

You likely know Brother Sehmy as our own Health and Safety Officer for CUPW 730. He is an active volunteer, community organizer, and tireless advocate for working class people and our right to have a voice at the table.

<https://www.rashpalforcouncil.ca/>



MEMORIES OF STACY KAMINSKY



By George Opstad, Letter Carrier Depot 2

I first met Stacy Kaminsky in 1983, not long after Phase II opened at West Edmonton Mall. An arcade had opened just off of fantasy land and we were all foosball fanatics. Stacy always came with his friends Dave and Jack Chong. After we all became friends, Dave and Jack would invite me back to their place to play foosball after the arcade closed. In foosball everyone wants to play forward and get all the glory but not Stacy. He was just as happy playing back. Often I'd ask him if he wanted to play forward and he'd just give me a gesture or say "Back is fine". Though quiet, Stacy wasn't shy about pointing out when I wasn't pulling my weight. He'd often make a comment like, "I won't get mad if you actually scored". After a night of foosballing, we'd all pile into my '79 cougar and go for breakfast.

In the early 90s, Stacy and I began working together at Depot 11 where the museum is now. We were both fairly new and it was great to see his familiar face. Often Stacy and I would work the 4 or 6 am shift together and if no walk needed covering, we'd be assigned duties inside like forwarding mail. We'd always try to go for coffee

with our friends Claudette and Simeon. I always knew Stacy was at work when I saw his bright yellow Monte Carlo that he restored and loved. We then went to different offices. Stacy went to South Edmonton and then Rosedale while I went to station L then 2.



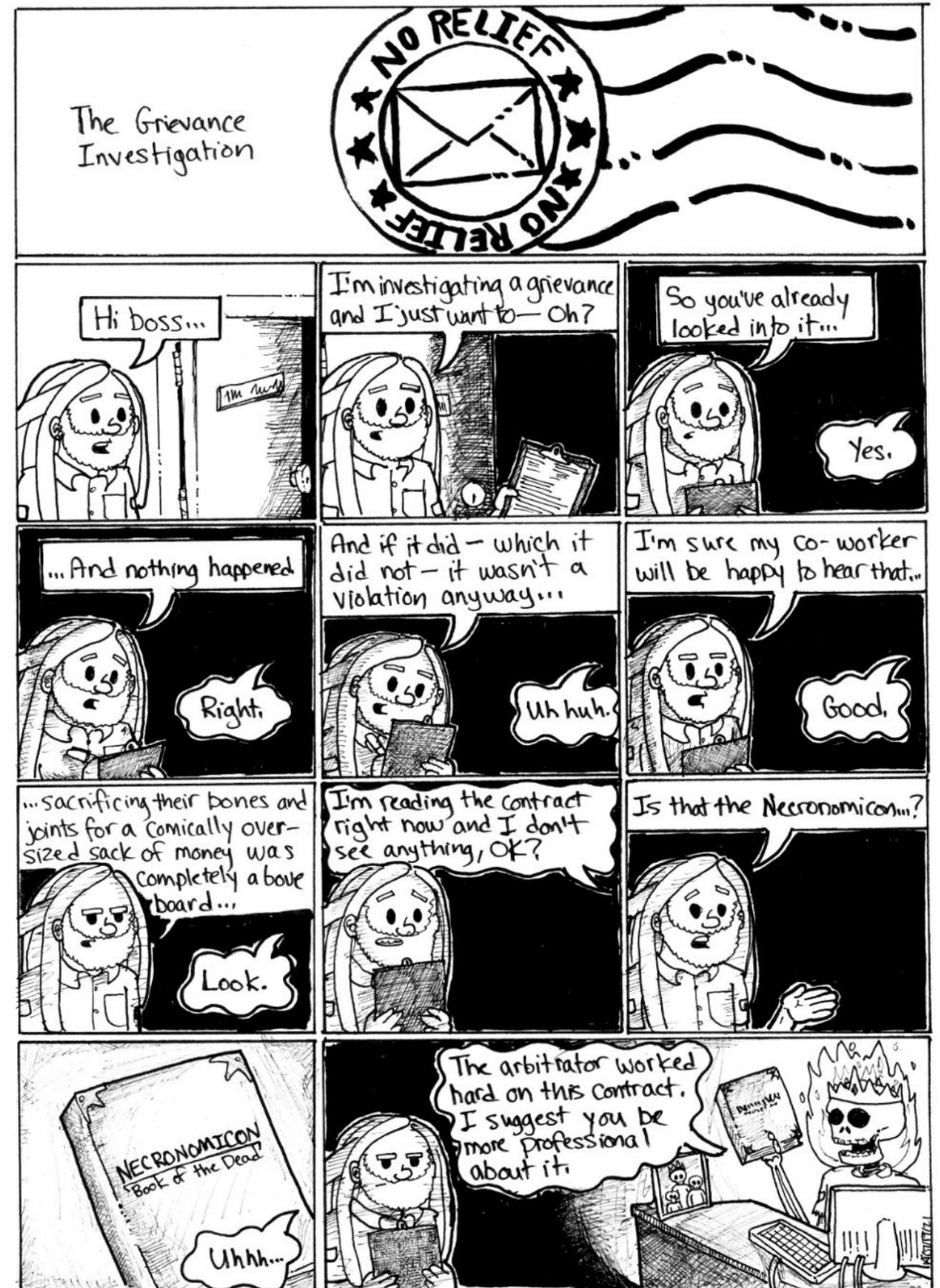
About 10 years ago, Stacy bid into Depot 2 with the encouragement of his good friend Ron Faust. We were usually working in the same row and for the last few years beside each other. Stacy would often be back before me and would stick around talking to his good friend Dave the staffing supervisor and then collate my flyers for me. While collating, we'd

often talk about our day or reminisce. Whenever the Aerosmith song "Dude looks like a lady" played, we'd think back and laugh of Jack working at the arcade and being in a rock band. The whole arcade would sing along and point at Jack with his long hair as he would run through the arcade yelling "No!" and making a gesture like an umpire ruling a runner safe. Stacy was a very conscientious worker and was always thinking of others. Even when he was given the day off, he'd always sort and pull the walk for the person covering him so that they'd have a good day. The lady that is covering his walk, Fahra, said that customers all over his walk were sad to hear the news and were all saying what a great mailman and person Stacy was.

For the last few years Stacy and I would meet at Wayne and Loretta Keith's house for movies or a fire. Stacy would often wear his beloved Maple Leafs shirt or hoodie. At his service, family and friends were all describing how devoted Stacy was to his family and friends. Stacy will be sadly missed by all that knew him.

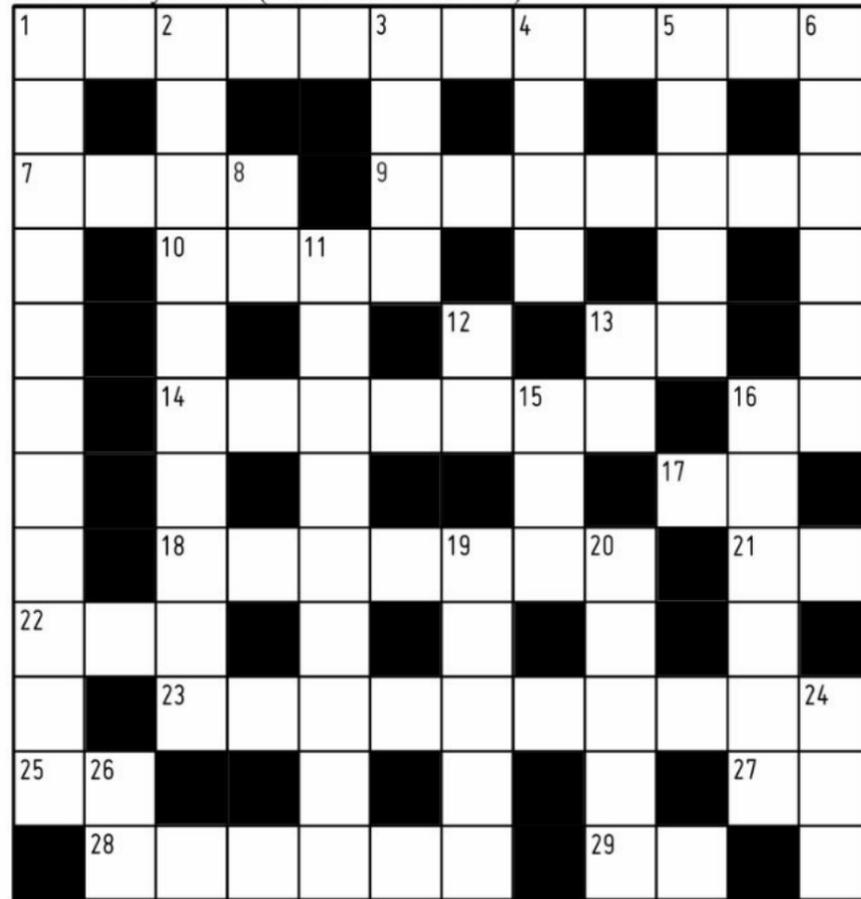


(Letter carrier Stacy Kaminsky was found unresponsive in his work vehicle on June 30, 2021, and did not regain consciousness. He was 53. -Ed.)



Kyle Turner, 2021

Crossword by Nathen (Edmonton Downtown)



Solution to previous puzzle:



Across

- 1 Most _____ operations are arranged by the United Nations to prevent conflict between two groups from starting again
- 7 Woodwind instrument with a plaintive, penetrating tone, produced by a double reed mouthpiece
- 9 offensive, disgusting
- 10 crosspiece of a ladder
- 13 einsteinium
- 14 Bruno _____ starred in the long-running TV series the beachcombers
- 16 Beryllium
- 17 Calcium
- 18 National Park in the Southwest corner of the Northwest Territories
- 21 Nobelium
- 22 International Woodworkers Association, formed in 1937
- 23 Army officer ranking below captain
- 25 Sodium
- 27 Indefinite Article
- 28 With the help of many, he defeated the brutal tyranny of the Batista regime, which ended with the triumph of the Cuban Revolution
- 29 Registered Nurse

Down

- 1 refers to the period early in the 20th century when the making and selling of alcohol was forbidden by law
- 2 Original, first, indigenous
- 3 William Lyon Mackenzie _____; Prime Minister of Canada 1921-26, 1926-30, and 1935-48
- 4 One of the great lakes
- 5 Images used as objects of worship
- 6 he played the father in the TV series Bonanza
- 8 European Union
- 11 Formed in 1873 as the _____ Canadian mounted Police; renamed in 1904 as the Royal _____ mounted police; took its present name in 1920.
- 12 We
- 13 Employment Insurance
- 15 Willful breaking of divine law
- 16 Tropical, tree-like herb bearing long-hanging cluster of sweet, pulpy fruit
- 19 Containing the Univalent group NO₂
- 20 pertaining to the mind or soul
- 24 Trinitrotoluene
- 26 Actinium



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CUPW 730 EDMONTON & AFFILIATES



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2021
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

REGISTER @
[CUPW730.CA /CALENDAR](https://cupw730.ca/calendar)
BY OCTOBER 1 @ NOON

COVER ART BY NIGEL LANGFORD