

PERSPECTIVE MAGAZINE

WHAT'S IN THE NEW
UPO/RSMC CONTRACT?
**A WALK THROUGH
THE CHANGES**

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**DELIVERING
COMMUNITY POWER
AND JUST RECOVERY**

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REMEMBERING
MEGAN WHITFIELD

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FINANCIAL INCLUSION, EXPANDED SERVICES AND A BETTER POSTAL SYSTEM FOR FIRST NATIONS AND THE NORTH

It's time to learn about and meet the needs of Indigenous communities. We can improve services and create new ones—like postal banking or a restored and improved Food Mail program—that will promote inclusion, equity, employment, and access.



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COMMUNITY
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Perspective is your national newspaper, with a mission to connect, inform, and mobilize members.

Communication is a two-way street!

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Please e-mail your feedback to: feedback@cupw-sttp.org

Editor: J.-P. Grenier

Production and translation: C. Benoit, A. Boulet, J.-R. Gaudreau,
J. Gillies, G. Laflamme, M. Parrot & M. Prévost

Associate editors: D. Bleakney, M. Champagne, B. Collins, C. Girouard,
J. Sanderson & J. Simpson

Contributors: G. Bickerton, S. Bird, C. Delisle, C. Heanna, K. Matthews,
A. Spires & E. Tobin

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- does not violate CUPW policy opposing discrimination and harassment against women, people of colour, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people, lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender individuals, people with different abilities, and/or CUPW policies and principles.
- is typed or written neatly.

- includes the author's name, address, local and a phone number where they can be reached if there are problems.

Perspective will withhold the author's name if necessary. Otherwise, the author's name and local will appear.

Perspective will contact authors if there are problems with their letters.

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President's Message

A Year Unlike Any Other

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically affected all our lives, and caused me to reflect about many things. First and foremost, I am so proud of CUPW members, from across the country, who continued to work and serve the public despite concerns about the virus and their health. You went above and beyond to keep the country running.

Our Private Sector Bargaining Units were very much a part of this effort. They worked hard to deliver parcels and to keep our postal facilities clean. On the East Coast, some members continued to dispatch emergency vehicles and provide vital medical communications.

Foodora couriers helped keep restaurants open and people fed by delivering to households across Canada until May 11th, when the multinational company pulled out.

I also want to congratulate all our local executive members and members sitting on local committees whose early initiatives and constant vigilance helped ease members' worries about working through the pandemic. In every post office and in PSBU workplaces, local CUPW leaders worked tirelessly to protect people's health and safety.

CUPW made unprecedented gains in winning paid leave for workers over 70 and high-risk workers. Canada Post was one of the few employers who provided these types of leave, and it is because we fought for it.

The pandemic once again showed the important role of Canada Post in connecting people and businesses. With people needing to stay inside to prevent the spread of the virus and businesses forced to close their brick and mortar stores, everyone relied on Canada Post to survive. This shows that we need to expand the services Canada Post provides.

Canada Post is this country's largest logistics and delivery network. We want the federal government to use this to build a postal service that provides postal banking, operates a fleet of vehicles that has no carbon footprint, assists seniors, and has green buildings. Postal administrations in other countries have adopted some or all of these services with great success. There is no reason why Canada Post cannot take these steps.

Canada Post is not going to make these changes without being pushed. I am encouraging all CUPW members to take part in Delivering Community Power activities. While in person meetings may still be limited, there are many actions we can still take. From signing petitions, to talking to your friends and families, to speaking to politicians, and attending rallies: there is something for everyone to do.

COVID-19 wasn't the only headline for postal workers this spring and summer. In June, Arbitrator Elizabeth MacPherson handed down her decision in regards to new collective agreements for both Urban Operations and RSMCs. Clearly, we did not get everything we wanted. We made some significant breakthroughs such as post-retirement benefits for RSMCs, but major issues still need to be addressed.

The fact that we obtained collective agreements that did not contain the rollbacks Canada Post wanted is due to the hard work and tenacity of our negotiating committee and you. The support and solidarity shown by postal workers were crucial in CUPW achieving wage increases and in protecting our rights.

The forced arbitration process for the new collective agreements shows that we need free collective bargaining and the right to strike. This has to be on all of our agendas for the next while.

These Collective Agreements will be expired in early 2022. We cannot wait until then to start talking to each other about the issues we want resolved. We all need to take steps to make sure that if and when it is needed, we will be able to use our right to strike.

During this time, we also negotiated Collective Agreements for a number of our Private Sector Bargaining Units. CUPW worked hard to ensure that these workers are paid fairly and treated with respect. We need to continually fight for dignity and fairness for all these workers.

On June 16, 2020, I was so proud to learn Foodora couriers voted overwhelmingly in favour of joining CUPW, despite the company's anti-union threats and intimidation. They are the first app-based workforce in Canada to unionize. CUPW is still working with these workers, helping them build strength in numbers to continue the fight to end gig-economy exploitation.

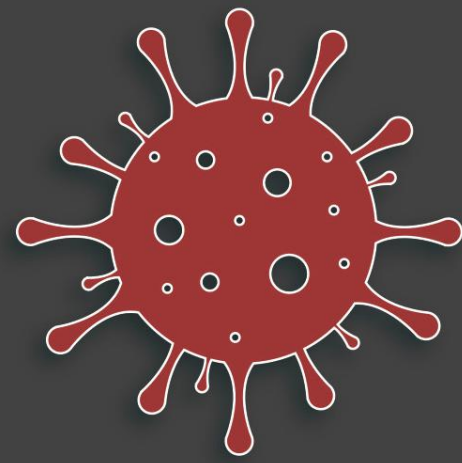
This has been a unique and important time. It has brought forward issues that we have never dealt with before. It has tried our patience and has played with our emotions. But most importantly, it has shown us that solidarity is needed more than ever, and will be our way to successfully obtain our demands.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Simpson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jan Simpson

What's it like being essential during a pandemic?



COVID-19

"The physical and mental well-being of my coworkers is my most important concern."

Ludja Charles-Pierre



Ludja Charles-Pierre

Letter Carrier | Montreal Local

When the pandemic hit, Ludja Charles-Pierre, a letter carrier in Brossard, and a member of her local's Health and Safety Committee, set out to make her coworkers feel safe and secure. That meant not only scavenging the city for PPE and cleaning supplies as Canada Post dragged its feet to get workers the essentials, but also being a much-needed ear for workers to express their fears and frustrations.

"While I haven't been touched by COVID directly, I have been affected. Everyone has been affected somehow," she says. "The physical and mental well-being of my coworkers is my most important concern. I noticed that as long as they feel supported and advocated for, they will be less stressed out."

Charles-Pierre is proud of how quickly her depot took charge of the pandemic. The schedule was changed to ensure physical distancing, they held educational sessions about how to properly wear a mask and dispose of gloves, and every spare moment she asked herself: "how can we protect ourselves, our families and our customers?"

While her depot is a success story, with no COVID cases and a good flow of information, Charles-Pierre knows this is not the case everywhere. Case in point, the people working in the retail counter.

"It feels like they are the stepchildren that Canada Post has forgotten," she says. "Canada Post gave them shower curtains instead of plexiglass; I had to give them hand sanitizer because the Corporation didn't. The bottom line is that it should be about the safety of postal workers and not about budget but that's not the case with many of our retail counters."

Charles-Pierre, who is now the Vice-President of the Health and Safety Committee, says the reason she became involved in health and safety is because she was the victim of an injustice at work and didn't know her rights.

Although the pandemic has increased frustrations with the employer and been stressful for many, Charles-Pierre remains solution-oriented. "I got into health and safety to help people and I will continue to participate to fight injustices and protect workers."

Emily Ottewell

Grievance Officer and Letter Carrier | Fraser Valley West Local

Emily Ottewell has worked for Canada Post for 20 years. Never has she experienced anything like COVID-19.

"The last four months have been a rollercoaster of emotions. I'm so grateful to have a job when others aren't so fortunate, but I'm mentally exhausted from overthinking every aspect of my day to stay safe and limit my exposure to the virus."

Like most postal workers and CUPW members, the pandemic has overhauled all aspects of Ottewell's life, from her working conditions, to her child's schooling, to how she communicates with friends and family.

Despite the challenges, she has managed to find some silver linings in all this change. With no sports or after school activities, the pace of life has changed and she is spending more quality time with her son. It's also easier to attend union meetings now that they are online.

Another big change is the relationship between workers and management.

"The dynamic between our health and safety committee and management has changed for the better. There's been a power shift. For the first time, Canada Post is being reasonable," she says. "In every single depot, the workers have taken control of their safety and management has not gotten in the way."



"I'm mentally exhausted from overthinking every aspect of my day to stay safe"

Emily Ottewell

Silas Rutley

Retail Clerk and Local President | Banff Local

The post office in Banff, Alberta is unique, made up entirely of P.O. Boxes and three retail counters. There are no letter carriers or RSMCs. Residents come to the physical post office to pick up their mail and parcels.

You can imagine the logistical challenges of this set up when COVID-19 restrictions were imposed. People who'd been asked to stay home to flatten the curve still needed to come to the post office to pick up necessities like pension and social assistance cheques, and online purchases.

"We are a town of 10,000 people who need to come to the post office," says Silas Rutley, retail counter clerk and president of the Banff local. "That is a health and safety nightmare. If one worker gets sick, we're closed and people can't get their essentials."

The Corporation was slow to implement new health and safety procedures, so Rutley took control of the situation. Often paying from his own pocket, he sourced hand sanitizer from a local distillery, he purchased cleaning supplies, signs, vinyl decals to mark distancing on floors, and installed caution tape around the post office. He limited customers to five at a time, which resulted in long line-ups, sometimes up to two hours long.

He received some pushback from management and even the town of Banff, who accused him of fear mongering, but "I wouldn't back down," he says.

Rutley posted videos of the Banff post office on social media, catching the attention of other retail clerks across the country, who have since reached out to him for advice on how to best organize their retail counters to keep workers safe.

"This is 1,000 percent the responsibility of the Corporation, but they didn't act quickly enough, and in our community, we look after our own and that is what we did. At the end of the day, I don't care how long the line is, the health and safety of our workers and of our town is what's paramount to me."

Steve Hurtis

RSMC | Scarborough Local

The 14th Avenue Canada Post facility in Markham, Ontario is one of the busiest and high volume RSMC stations in all of Canada... and that was before COVID-19. Since the beginning of the pandemic, when most of the country shut down and people turned to online shopping, parcel volumes have increased 30 to 40 percent.

There are over 90 RSMC routes and 147 workers at the 14th Avenue station. With COVID-19 health and safety precautions in place to keep workers physically distant and new staggered start times, it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep up with the demand.

"People are really stressed out about COVID and parcel volumes," says Steve Hurtis, an RSMC for over 10 years and member of Local Joint Health and Safety Committee, as well as the COVID team. "Workers were already mentally exhausted from working through a pandemic, but now that they have to do more in less time, they are starting to feel the physical effects of working through COVID."



"It's hard and I'm hurt that I can't fix all the issues for my workers, but I will continue to try."

Steve Hurtis

As part of the COVID team, Hurtis must inspect and organize the station, checking in on workers, making sure they are practicing physical distancing and have enough protective equipment, before working his route.

What's become apparent during his morning inspections is that a real safety concern is the sheer number of parcels. "We simply don't have the room and people have started to trip over boxes. I'm not sure what to do. It's hard and I'm hurt that I can't fix all the issues for my workers, but I will continue to try."

Judy King

TForce Driver | Saskatoon Local

The early days of the COVID-19 pandemic were scary and nerve-wracking for Saskatoon, SK TForce driver Judy King, who is diabetic and has a heart condition. A large portion of her deliveries and pick-ups are in hospitals and other health facilities and she has transported tests from COVID hotspots near Saskatoon.

"The early days were terrifying, but I'm now looking at our situation as the new normal. It helps to know that everyone is going through this together," says King.

"We have to stick up for our own rights. They won't be given to us"

Judy King



While she has taken all necessary measures to stay healthy and safe – wearing a mask and gloves and even using a mixture of bleach and water to sanitize when she couldn't find hand sanitizer – the virus isn't her only concern.

"If we go down, if we have any symptoms, we have to stop working, and if we stop working, we don't get paid," she says. This is the anxiety of the owner/operator model used by companies like TForce to deny employee status to its workers and avoid paying EI, sick days and CPP.

As the workload increases through the pandemic, burnout and stress are also real issues that cannot be ignored. As a shop steward, King reminds her fellow workers that their health comes first.

"If I feel like I'm putting my health at risk by doing a delivery, I won't do it. We have to stick up for our own rights. They won't be given to us," she adds.

Patrick Ward

TForce Driver | Kelowna Local

When the pandemic hit, Patrick Ward, like many workers, was faced with a difficult decision: continue to work and potentially endanger his loved ones, or risk not being able to pay his bills. Ultimately, there wasn't much of a choice. "My wife has multiple sclerosis. I'm currently the sole provider for my family and even with my full-time job, we are still working poor. There was no option not to work."

TForce workers in British Columbia fought for many years for the right to unionize and to gain basic employee rights under the Canadian Labour Code. While TForce workers in Kelowna are members of CUPW and have negotiated collective agreements, their employer continues to reject their employee status and therefore doesn't pay into EI or CPP. When the pandemic hit, workers like Ward, with high risk family members, didn't have access to special leave like Canada Post workers.

The company said it couldn't find PPE and left it up to workers to protect themselves. Adding insult to injury, TForce only offered to reimburse \$20 per person for the PPE they purchased. "That made it pretty clear that we are truly disposable workers in the company's view," says Ward.

The stress of continuing to interact with customers, with little to no protective equipment, while trying to keep his family safe, took a huge mental toll on Ward. "I was constantly worried that I would be bringing the virus home to my wife and daughters. I could not have peace of mind while continuing to provide for my family. I was so angry, alone, and sad."

The stress of it all was too much for Ward, who sought help from his social steward, and finally a clinical counsellor, which he must pay for out of pocket because TForce members don't have these benefits.

For Ward, the pandemic is a reminder that being part of a union isn't enough, there needs to be the will of the membership to look out for every single member. "I would love to see CUPW members come together to raise up the units that don't have the same rights. We need to look out for each other because all we have is one another. I am extremely proud to be a member of CUPW and realize that I must be a driving force to change my workplace, but none of us can do it alone."



"I would love to see CUPW members come together to raise up the units that don't have the same rights."

Patrick Ward

Ryan Kendall

Combined Urban Service Driver
for Nor-Pel | Breton Local

It's the same story across the country: with the pandemic shutting down most storefronts, people have turned to online shopping in record numbers, leaving delivery workers overworked and overwhelmed with no real end in sight.

"From March to July, we were at Christmas capacity with no break," says Ryan Kendall, a NOR-PEL driver in Sydney, Nova Scotia. "We were working full out for 10, 11 hours a day, coming in on Saturdays and we still couldn't keep up. It took the company almost five months to hire extra workers and only now in August are we caught up. But for how long? Christmas is right around the corner."

NOR-PEL is a Canada Post contractor and its workers are an integral part of Canada Post's delivery network. Although Kendall is thankful to still be working while many have lost their jobs, and takes great pride in helping Nova Scotians stay at home and stay safe, he is frustrated by Nor-Pel's refusal to acknowledge and compensate workers for their contributions.

"We have gone above and beyond for six months now, and we never even got a thank you," he says. "This company has made a ton of money off of workers who gave up our weekends, time with our families, put our health at risk because we care about what we do. While other companies gave their workers a pandemic top-up, NOR-PEL told us they didn't couldn't afford to, which is absolutely ridiculous."

It's no secret that one of the few winners of the pandemic are delivery companies like NOR-PEL, and Kendall struggles to understand the lack of respect from the employer. "It makes you feel like you don't matter; that you're just the little guy working the front lines."



"Members shouldn't have to worry about choosing between their jobs and taking care of their kids or loved ones."

Miles Lau

Miles Lau

RSMC and Secretary-Treasurer | Scarborough Local

Miles Lau hasn't left his house in over nine weeks. His wife tested positive for COVID-19 in early May, and three months later, she is still sick, which means Lau and their two children must remain under quarantine.

"It's been difficult," says Lau. "I've had to work, parent, teach and take care of my wife. It can feel overwhelming sometimes."

The Scarborough local, where Lau is Secretary-Treasurer, is made up of 14 facilities and 2,000 members. Since he's in quarantine, Lau has relied on his fellow executive members, shop stewards and members of the special COVID team to keep him up to date about what's happening on the work floors. Of course, technology keeps him connected and has allowed him to keep working from home. "It's hard not to be on the floor, but it's been a team effort to keep things going."

Lau's wife is an RSMC and was granted special leave. "I'm so grateful that the National office was able to negotiate special leave. You hear horror stories of employers forcing workers to take leave without pay or go on CERB and I'm grateful that my family hasn't had to worry about that."

The system isn't perfect. As restrictions ease across the country, Canada Post is forcing many workers on leave back to work. Since the majority of the workers in Lau's depot are immigrants and many have never been unionized before, many are susceptible to bullying and intimidation from bosses and may not feel comfortable speaking up for fear of retribution.

"Members shouldn't have to worry about choosing between their jobs and taking care of their kids or loved ones. We are lucky to have union protections and bargaining rights. We need to make sure all workers know they are entitled to these rights."

"Leadership and workfloor initiative allowed us to respond well and protect our members."

Michel Côté

Michel Côté

President | St-Jean Local

It's every local president's worst nightmare: A COVID-19 outbreak in one of their offices. For Michel Côté, it was an opportunity to see if the emergency measures he put in place at the beginning of the pandemic would stand up.

"The St-Jean Local managed the situation and took initiatives to reassure the members. Once the outbreak was confirmed, the emergency plan was implemented and we took charge of the situation," says Côté.

That plan included working closely with social steward Evelyne Lagacée. She took the time to speak to the workers about their fears regarding their sick colleagues as well as the possibility of getting sick themselves. She helped sort out special leave for those who needed to quarantine. Côté, on the other hand, made sure the workplace was cleaned, disinfected and safe for workers to return to work.

Involving a social steward was so successful that this strategy was adopted by another office where there was an outbreak. "To ensure that the job is well done, do it yourself," says Côté.

"Leadership and workfloor initiative allowed us to respond well and protect our members. The workers of St-Jean are now assured that the Union is there for them."



Christmas-level parcel volumes in Spring?

COVID-19 has changed everything!

We all felt the weight of COVID-19 being declared a pandemic. While there was no way of foreseeing the changes that would take place in the following days, weeks, and months – we knew we had to be prepared.

How was COVID-19 transmitted? What symptoms do we look out for? Who are the most vulnerable? Are we asymptomatic? Have we been in contact with someone who had the virus and did not know it?

The questions were endless, and the concern grew greater by the minute.

As schools, offices and stores closed or reduced their hours, CUPW members not only continued to work – but worked extra hard! Being considered essential meant that workers had to endure unprecedented stress as they looked out for their communities, themselves, and their families.

Postal workers showed dedication to their job and their communities as they continued to go to work, even when personal protective equipment wasn't readily available. CUPW knows how hard this was, and we are fighting every single day to make this sacrifice and undue stress is never again put on your shoulders. At no point in time

should workers be expected to do unsafe work. Health and safety must always be the priority. Don't forget: an injury to one is an injury to all.

Within days of the lockdown, we saw many things change, but one thing that stood out in a positive light was that people across the country were adamant to help in any way they could. Some people left hand sanitizer on their front porch, some left their mailboxes open, and some did crafts to show postal workers their appreciation.

Settling into the new normal of a pandemic isn't easy, but it was always evident that we were in this together. Everyone felt the anxiety brought by COVID-19, and everyone knew they had a role to play in flattening the curve.

The increase in parcel volumes was an additional challenge that came with the COVID-19 self-isolation. Families relied on the postal service to help them get the products they needed during their quarantine or social distancing, resulting in Christmas-level parcel volumes! With parcel deliveries growing at a record pace from April to May, Canada Post hit an all-time one-day record on



“Being considered essential meant that workers had to endure unprecedented stress as they looked out for their communities, themselves, and their families”

Tuesday, May 19 with 2.1 million parcels delivered to Canadians. That's roughly three times the norm for that time of year.

While delivery delays were inevitable, postal workers, unsurprisingly, answered the call – working overtime and on weekends to keep up with the demand.

It is, however, noticeably clear that not all the additional burden workers carried would have been needed had the employer fairly negotiated collective agreements. Long hours, unpaid shifts, and a lack of access to personal protective equipment and leave provisions put workers at risk. We will continue to hold all employers' feet to the fire: they must be held accountable for poor management and corporate greed.

Society at large has seen how unprepared we are all to a crisis situation. It is for this reason that CUPW has joined

over 150 other organizations to call for a Just Recovery. As we move forward from COVID-19, we must ensure that we have the right policies and systems in place to ensure nobody is left behind, and nobody is put at risk in the event of another crisis.

In fact we must acknowledge that we have now entered the second wave of COVID-19. For this reason, CUPW is keeping a close eye on the situation. We are holding the employer responsible for the health and safety of workers. Personal protective equipment, clear and accessible leave provisions, and more support must be readily available in the event of a new spike in COVID-19 cases.

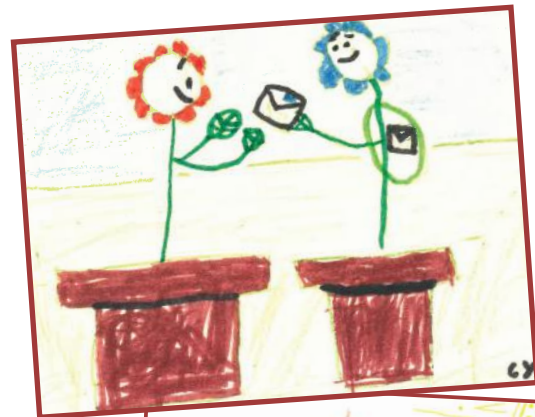
While 2020 has been a year full of unexpected surprises and challenges, we are marching forward with determination to see change. *Together, we can and will, defeat corporate greed – we are all just getting started.*



COVID-19 shines a light on the child care crisis



Christopher Yarker - Age 11



It's impossible to write about COVID-19 without talking about the implications for working parents and their children. And it is hard not to speak about what it's meant for CUPW members who have relied on the projects of the CUPW Child Care Fund.

Working parents struggle to balance work and family during the best of times. In the absence of a well-funded child care system, parents end up relying on a hodgepodge of stopgap arrangements with family members, friends and neighbours to ensure their children are well looked after while they go at work.

COVID has made these daily struggles that much more difficult. With the closure of schools and child care centres, families are scrambling to put something in place within a shrinking number of options. Grandparents can't fill-in – it's too big a risk. Friends and neighbours sheltering – that option is now gone. Even the emergency child care that was available for essential workers was difficult to qualify for – and postal workers in the majority of provinces and territories weren't even eligible.

This meant many parents were forced to take unpaid leave, to leave the workforce altogether, or to work from home while also caring for their children. The reality is, that it is often mothers who fill the gap. Data from the Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey found that the burden of balancing care and work is falling primarily to women.

The impact of COVID for members who have children with disabilities is that much more acute. We interviewed members about what COVID meant for them and their children and this is what we heard. "It is causing a lot of stress for my family. I had to take special leave because my son is at high risk because of fear and anxiety created by COVID." And this, "Things at home are so different. Our daughters' day program has closed – my partner and I are doing our best to share her care."



Rose Perry - Age 8

The pandemic has revealed the weakness in our social infrastructure that treats child care and care work in general as individual choices rather than essential for the economy.

Licensed and regulated child care is a fragile web of centres and home-based services. It's precarious and inadequate at the best of times, but the COVID-19 pandemic has it on the verge of collapse. Most centres have closed and many may not survive, leaving even fewer options for parents.

Canada's three national child care organizations have joined together to call for an action plan and funding from the federal government. You can be part of this call by signing their petition:

<https://childcareforall.ca/plan-to-sustain-canadas-early-learning-and-child-care-elcc-through-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

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Arbitration Awards

The Decision, the Impact and the Future

On June 11, 2020, CUPW received Arbitrator Elizabeth MacPherson's decision regarding the collective agreements for our two bargaining units at Canada Post: Urban Operations and Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers.

While we strongly believe that the decisions that affect our future should never be referred to an arbitrator, Ms. MacPherson did rule in our favour on numerous issues, including wage increases, job security and post retirement benefits for RSMC's, however she did not agree with all of our health and safety recommendations and pay for all time worked for RSMCs.

Despite the gains we made, it should never have come to this. Workers have the right to free and fair collective bargaining. When the government passed a law to send us back to work, it robbed workers of the ability to negotiate solutions to the problems we face in the workplace and put our future in the hands of an outsider. Moreover, the government assured us and the public that the arbitrated settlement would be completed in 90 days. We all know how that turned out.

The next round of bargaining begins in less than a year and we must prepare for another fight. Not only are we dealing with an uncompromising employer, we now know that the supposedly worker-friendly Liberal government has no problem forcing us back to work with an unconstitutional law.

We will need to come together, support each other and our negotiating committee, and stand united against the employer and the government. This community of workers' will is strong, and together we can make a difference.

A Complete Summary of the Arbitration Awards for Urban Operations and RSMC

The awards are comprehensive and lengthy. The negotiating committee provided a thorough analysis, breaking down each issue in a series of bulletins published throughout the summer, which we have now summarized in Perspective. *You can find these bulletins and the complete arbitration award on our website: www.cupw.ca*

Wages and Duration

The Urban collective agreement covers four years and expires on January 31, 2022. The RSMC collective agreement covers four years and expires on December 31, 2021.

The Urban wage increases are effective on the following dates:

February 1, 2018	2.0%
February 1, 2019	2.0%
February 1, 2020	2.5%
February 1, 2021	2.9%

The RSMC wage increases are effective as follows:

January 1, 2018	2.0%
January 1, 2019	2.0%
January 1, 2020	2.5%
January 1, 2021	2.9%

All wage increases will be retroactive to the effective date of the increase. Retirees will receive retroactive pay for any period of active service and their pensions will be adjusted to reflect the impact of any wage increases. Likewise, disability insurance payments will be adjusted to reflect the wages in effect when the disability commenced. Life insurance payments will also be adjusted and payments will be made to the beneficiaries.

For RSMCs, the variable allowance (householder delivery) and the knowledge sort and civic address allowances will be increased by the same percentages as the wage increases, 2.0%, 2.0%, 2.5%, and 2.9%.

For more information, see Bulletins #176 dated July 15, 2020 and Bulletin #175, July 10, 2020.

Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)

Urban regular employees and RSMC route holders and PREs will have their wage increases protected against inflation. This protection is provided in the last two years of the collective agreement. If the cost of living increases by more than 5.33%, during these two years, the COLA protection will trigger. If this occurs, CPC will be required to make regular lump sum payments until the end of the contract or until the rate of inflation drops below 5.33%.

If inflation does not surpass 5.33%, the COLA will not result in any payments. During the final two years of the contract, postal workers will receive wage increases of

5.4%. Since the COLA will start paying out at 5.33%, we will receive protection in the event inflation rapidly increases.

For more information, see Bulletin # 157 dated June 23, 2020.

Urban Temporary Employees to Move through the Pay Increments

Arbitrator MacPherson rejected the Union's proposal to reduce the number of pay increment levels and raise minimum wage levels for employees hired on or after February 1, 2013. However, she did rule that as soon as a temporary employee reaches 1,000 hours of work in a year (January 1 to December 31), they will progress to the next pay increment starting with the next pay period. This change applies as of January 1, 2019.

This means that if in 2019 a temporary employee has reached 1,000 hours of work in that year, they will be entitled to the pay increase starting in the pay period following the thousandth hour. In such cases, the employee will be entitled to a retroactive payment from the pay period that follows the 1000th hour worked in 2019. The same applies for the year 2020.

For more information, see Bulletin #150 dated June 17, 2020.

Union Education Fund

The amount that Canada Post pays to the Union for the education of our members is increased from 3 cents to 3.5 cents per hour paid to both Urban employees and RSMCs.

Short Term Disability Plan (STDP)

There are improvements to the STDP for both RSMCs and Urban employees. During STDP appeals, CPC representatives often slandered the employee in their medical file. Arbitrator MacPherson ruled that this practice must now cease and all final appeal decisions shall be based on medical evidence only. Only the employee, the union and the Case Manager can communicate with the Independent Medical Physician.

Going forward recovery of overpayments due to EI payments while on STDP will be limited to 10% of pay per pay period.

For employees suffering from mental illness, the contracts will now include the waiving of STDP time limits on the basis of an objective medical diagnosis if the employee doesn't have a support network authorized to assist the employee throughout the process.

For more information, see Bulletin #163 dated June 26, 2020.

Job Security

There are improvements to job security for both Urban workers and RSMCs.

For Urban workers, the date in clause 53.01 is updated to June 1, 2020. This means that all employees holding a regular position (part-time and full-time) as of June 1, 2020, are entitled to the 40-kilometre limit in the event of a relocation (for Toronto and Montreal, the relocation radius corresponds to the Major Area Postal Plant (MAPP) territory. As a result, more than 6,000 additional regular employees have obtained the 40-kilometre radius job security protection. If an employee obtains a regular position after that date, and has at least five years of continuous service, then they have the same protection. In other cases, Urban employees also have job security, but only if they accept a position in the bargaining unit anywhere in Canada.

Prior to the arbitration award, Article 23 of the RSMC Collective Agreement only provided recall rights for 12 months, with 2 weeks notice of lay-off. The laid off employee could use their seniority to obtain a vacant route only in the original installation. Under the award, RSMC job security protections have been greatly expanded. Should there be no vacant routes or PRE positions within a 75 km radius of an office with a surplus employee who has five years of service, the surplus employee will continue to receive their pay for either a full year, or until a route or position becomes available.

Should the surplus employee choose to apply for a vacant route or PRE positions outside of the maximum 75 km radius, they would be awarded that route, and the Corporate relocation policy would apply to provide assistance with the cost of the move. There are also many other new provisions such as protections for employees from being permanently forced onto a route that is not comparable to their former route or position.

For more information, see Bulletin #164, June 29, 2020.

Group 1 Staffing

Arbitrator MacPherson added a new provision, applicable to Group 1, stipulating that temporary employees are to be used only for temporary operational requirements and wherever practicable, such work shall be combined in order to create regular positions. This will allow the Union to analyze the usage of temporary employees' hours and argue that these hours be converted into much needed, regular full-time or part-time jobs. It will also allow the consideration of both temporary and part-time hours to create regular full-time jobs.

This new provision will apply even if the national ratio of 78% full-time hours, under Appendix P of the Urban collective agreement, is achieved. The arbitrator rejected Canada Post's request to reduce this ratio to 75%, which would have reduced the number of regular full-time positions nationwide by approximately 400.

For more information, see Bulletin #169, July 6, 2020.

RSMC: Injury on Duty Pay

RSMCs will now be paid by Canada Post when off work due to an injury on duty (WCB claim). This payment shall be 75% of regular pay. While waiting for a decision from WCB, employees will continue to be paid at 70% of their regular pay.

Permanent Relief Employees who have a WCB claim will have the payment amount calculated based on an average of their previous 52 weeks' earnings.

RSMC Absence Coverage

Under the previous collective agreement, the Corporation was responsible to provide coverage for all absences in installations with five or more RSMC routes. Effective September 1, 2020, on call relief employees will be utilized in postal installations with three or more RSMC routes, affecting 258 offices and 866 RSMCs.

RSMC Post-Retirement Health Care Benefits

All RSMCs that retire with 15 years of service, as an employee, shall be eligible for post-retirement health care benefits. The eligibility period shall start on either January 1, 2004 or at the first date of service for employees hired after January 1, 2004.

RSMC Job Retention: No Contracting Out

Under the previous RSMC collective agreement, there was little protection for bargaining unit work and no protection against the contracting out of RSMC work. The new Appendix ensures that the work currently performed by bargaining unit employees will be protected. However, in certain circumstances, if there aren't enough employees to do the work, the Corporation may temporarily assign work to others, but only after making every reasonable attempt to ensure that employees perform the work.

For new points of call, the Appendix works in conjunction with Appendix "E" of the Urban collective agreement to ensure the work is attributed to the correct bargaining unit. Any new types of activities agreed to by CUPW and CPC can be assigned to employees in the bargaining unit provided they are not already the work of another bargaining unit or managerial in nature.

For more information, see Bulletin #166, June 30, 2020.

Vacant Positions in Group 2

The Arbitrator also granted Canada Post's request for the right not to fill vacancies in Group 2 when a surplus is expected, regardless of the group. The number of positions that may be exempt from being filled shall not exceed the anticipated number of surplus employees minus the number of early voluntary terminations in groups other than Group 2. These vacant positions will be temporarily staffed using the provisions of Article 17. The Union has the right to be informed and consulted when these situations arise.

For more information, see Bulletin #167, July 2, 2020.

Work/Life Balance and Letter Carriers

Arbitrator MacPherson did not support all of CUPW's proposals directed towards improving the work/life balance of letter carriers and reducing injuries. Her award does include some changes to Appendix LL (Work/life Balance), compulsory overtime, and temporary peak period workforce. Overall, these changes should improve the work/life balance for letter carriers and relief letter carriers'.

Appendix LL: The "Work and Life Balance" section of this Appendix allows employees to request to have the overtime on their route covered on an occasional basis if they have a family commitment, appointment and/or

other legitimate personal needs. The trigger to qualify for this assistance has not changed. Employees must still work an average of one hour of overtime, three days a week for a period of twenty days. There are six changes:

1. Employees can choose to only have assistance on certain days of the week.
2. The amount of assistance on each day would be equal to the average amount of overtime that the employee worked on that day of the week during the 20-day qualifying period above.
3. Employees can now opt in, with one week's written notice, to receive this assistance. They must agree to get the assistance for at least four weeks and can extend the assistance with one week's written notice.
4. The Corporation may canvass to see if additional employees would like to receive the assistance.
5. This assistance will also be available for the RLC covering a route that is receiving assistance.
6. For employees who are receiving this assistance on specific days of the week, they will be entitled to volunteer for 17.04 – overtime on other routes, on the days that they are not receiving this assistance. On the days that letter carriers and RLCs are receiving assistance, they are not eligible for overtime on other routes.

Compulsory Overtime: The parties had agreed to suspend clause 15.14 – Compulsory overtime on other routes. The Arbitrator accepted CPC's position to restore this provision effective January 1, 2022, one month prior to the expiration of the collective agreement.

Temporary Peak Period (TPP) Workforce: Canada Post can now implement, in any depot it chooses, a TPP workforce to assist with the heavier volumes of mail and parcels. This workforce can be used from the beginning of November to the end of January each year. All existing rules for staffing and the assignment of overtime continue to apply with one exception. TPP employees will be offered extended hours prior to going to city wide overtime. However, CPC can only remove work from routes when the regular employee has indicated they do not wish to work the overtime on their own route. This means that CPC does not have the ability to arbitrarily remove work from any route.

Letter Carrier Overburdening

Although Arbitrator MacPherson did not fix the multiple bundle delivery method for letter carriers, she awarded other language that should partially help to address the issue of overburdening on letter carrier routes, including mail volume updates, percentage of coverage and Mail Volume Index (MVI) study, and a study on the weight and volume of mail in letter carrier's satchels

Mail Volume Updates: Usually the Personal Contact Items (PCI) volume data is not up to date when a restructure is implemented, and is completely outdated by the next restructure. We now have a process to update the volumes of lettermail and PCIs on letter carrier routes once a year. Updates will be done using the Mail Volume Index (MVI) and the PCI index for the previous year. Routes will only be adjusted if the assessed time increases. If this update causes a route to become over-assessed, the employee will receive over-assessed pay until the route is adjusted to less than 485 minutes.

Percentage of Coverage and MVI Study: The percentage of coverage formula, which determines how many points of call a route is credited for each day, is no longer accurate. A joint committee will review all aspects of the percentage of coverage formula and attempt to achieve the following objective:

- Update the existing formula or establish a new percentage of coverage formula that determines more accurately the number of points of call to which a letter carrier delivers to on an average day.
- Analyze and review the calculation of the Mail Volume Index for machine-sequenced and manual mail to determine a method to apply the MVI separately for machine-sequenced and manual mail.

Once this project is completed, we hope to come up with an updated or a new percentage of coverage formula and MVI application for machine-sequenced and manual mail. The assessed value of letter carrier routes should have an "evaluated workload that reflects the work performed".

Study on the Weight and Volume of Mail in Letter Carriers' Satchels: There will be an Appendix "AA" project to study the weight and volume of mail in letter carriers' satchels to ensure letter carriers are not carrying excessive weight or volumes of mail in their satchels. This includes all product types – lettermail, neighbourhood mail and packets. The project must be completed within one year of the date of the Arbitrator's decision.

One Bundle Delivery Method

While it appears that the Arbitrator understands that there is an increased health and safety risk for letter carriers using the two-bundle delivery method, she did not recognize that allowing letter carriers to combine or merge their manual and sequenced mail in their vehicles is also a health and safety risk. She imposed an MOA in her decision that *"would formalize the current practice that letter carriers will not be disciplined if they chose to integrate their sequenced and manual mail prior to commencing the delivery portion of their route."* The language provided by the Arbitrator clearly stated that the mail would be combined in the letter carrier's vehicle.

This decision does not resolve the issue and we must continue to fight for letter carriers to have the right to combine manual and sequenced mail at a sortation case.

RSMCs: Overtime Pay But Still Not Paid for All Hours Worked

Arbitrator MacPherson's award provides for RSMCs to be paid at overtime rates under some circumstances but does not result in RSMCs being paid for all of the hours they work.

Route holders and PREs who work more than forty hours during any period of two consecutive weeks (not including weekends) shall be paid time and a half of their derived hourly rate for hours worked in excess of forty per week regardless of the time value listed in Schedule A.

Example: The Schedule A lists a route at 36 hours per week. The employee worked 50 hours in the first week and 37 hours in the second week. They will be paid for ten (10) hours worked at time and a half (1.5) for the first week. In the first week, the four (4) hours worked between hours 36 and 40 remain unpaid. In the second week, the one hour between 36 and 37 hours will also remain unpaid.

RSMCs must record the number of hours worked every day and notify the Corporation that they have worked an average of more than 40 hours per week over a period of two (2) consecutive weeks.

When such an overtime situation occurs, Canada Post must pay the overtime. It then it has three options:

- Do nothing and continue paying the overtime worked under these rules when the situation occurs again
- Restructure to reduce the route (RMS hours) so that employees are not working more than 40 hours per week
- Where applicable, provide assistance to perform the work beyond the average of 40 hours per week. The salary of the employee providing the assistance will be paid by the Corporation at the appropriate derived hourly rate and will not be deducted from the route holder's salary. The route holder's salary will remain the same until the route is reduced.

RSMC Weekend Parcel Delivery

Arbitrator MacPherson rejected CUPW's demand that all work performed on Saturday and Sunday be paid at an overtime rate of double time. She instead awarded Canada Post's proposal for a per piece method. When the Corporation decides it is necessary to have parcels delivered on the weekend, employees, at the maximum pay level, who volunteer to perform the work shall receive \$1.4180 drive time per kilometre effective January 1, 2020 and \$1.4590 effective January 1, 2021. Effective July 1, 2020 employees will be paid \$2.00 per parcel (not per stop) and the vehicle expense described in clause 33.01(b), will be applied when employees provide a personal vehicle to perform the work.

The voluntary weekend work will be offered by equal opportunity. Employees who volunteer to work on the weekend will not necessarily deliver parcels from their own route.

As a result of this decision, PCIs delivered on the weekend will not be counted on the log sheets. When parcels are delivered on the weekend, there is less PCI time attributed to the routes delivered during the week, resulting in less pensionable time and less basic pay.

Letters from CPC

Three letters, covering the environment, new services, and the pension are included in Arbitrator MacPherson's decision. The Corporation and the Union will agree to work collaboratively on a selected set of new financial services. The parties are to work together to develop a strong environmental strategy for the Corporation by

reviewing all aspects, including fleet, buildings, products and services. During the life of the collective agreement, the parties are to have discussions with the objective of defining common ground and solutions that address the sustainability of the pension plan.

Additional Changes to the Collective Agreement: Urban

Prior to the arbitration, the parties had come to an agreement on a number of issues that will also be incorporated into the Urban collective agreement and they are as follows:

- Clause 5.01 shall include genetic characteristics
- New wage chart for MAM10s, MAM11s, EL5s and Lead Hands in groups 3 and 4
- New classification of VHE10 – Full Service Vehicle Mechanic
- Protection of current VHE9s not to be declared surplus as a result of introducing VHE10s.
- Group 3 & 4 Language Review Committee
- Dental Fee guide to be updated; one-year lag of dental fee guide
- Workplace Diversity and Employment Equity Committee
- Parties to develop a Domestic Violence Policy
- Access to Information for Group 2 Restructures:
 - Access to CPC's software programs including Georoute
 - An Oversight Committee to address concerns regarding restructures
 - More information for union observers
 - Clarification on the collation of 3 or more sets of admail

- Appendix AA projects on:
 - Overburdening of letter carriers due to weight and/or volume of mail, Neighbourhood Mail and packets
 - Delivery Pilot – To test flexible dynamic routing delivery models
- Pilot on Temporary Employee availability for group 1 in Halifax and for group 2 in Vancouver
- Overtime while on training
- CPC to provide Permanent Relief in offices with 12 or more routes
- Points and uniforms now the same as Letter Carriers
- Value of sequenced mail cannot be more than 20% (previously it was 30%)
- Workplace Diversity and Employment Equity Committee
- Parties to develop a Domestic Violence Policy.

Additional Changes to the Collective Agreement: RSMC

Prior to the arbitration, the parties had come to and agreement on a number of issues that will also be incorporated into the RSMC collective agreement and they are as follows:

- Clause 5.01 shall include genetic characteristics
- Access to Information:
 - CPC to provide a 12-month implementation schedule
 - National and Locals to be provided with more information to be able to verify restructures
 - No difference in restructures between offices with more or less than 6 routes
 - National Oversight committee to review restructures
 - Work Content Committee to review and possibly amend the RMS and how routes are built
 - Five years of Sick Leave Without Pay
 - Dental Fee guide to be updated; one-year lag of dental fee guide
 - Pay protection for three months after a restructure
 - Bidding by seniority after restructures



Q & A

**with Chief negotiators
Nancy Beauchamp and Sylvain Lapointe**

Nancy Beauchamp is not the kind of person who sits back and waits for others to act. When she sees injustice, she must do something. It's what lead her to help Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers negotiate their first collective agreement 16 years ago. She continues to fight for RSMC equality – through the pay equity process and most recently as the Chief Negotiator for the RSMC unit in the latest round of bargaining. After a gruelling more than two-year process, an arbitrator finally awarded contracts to both the RSMC and urban bargaining units.

Nancy Beauchamp tells us what life is really like for the negotiating committee.



Q

What convinced you to take on the role of Chief Negotiator for the RSMC bargaining unit during the last round of negotiations?

I did not apply for the role, since there was no offer. The National Executive Board took the decision to appoint a member of the RSMC unit. To my knowledge, a few names came up during the discussions, including my own. I had bargaining experience, having participated in three previous rounds, and we were just coming out of the pay equity process, in which I also participated. It was continuity, it was logical. I knew what was at stake and what had happened during the last negotiations. It was perfect timing. I am the first RSMC to become Chief Negotiator for the unit. I am very proud of that.

The RSMC bargaining unit is still young. We joined the Union 16 years ago, and my involvement goes back to our very first collective agreement. I think that there is nothing better than having an RSMC to represent the unit at the highest level. It is important for RSMCs to know that anything is possible, that we belong at all levels of the Union.

Q

Was there any aspect of the negotiations that surprised you?

The lack of respect from Canada Post still surprises me. That the employer is still so reluctant to grant us basic rights, such as paying for all hours worked, is something I do not understand. How, in 2020, can a company say, "You have a 7-hour itinerary. You worked 10 hours, but I'm only paying you 7 hours?" There is no justification for that. The employer says "no" simply to disagree. To see

the extent of their disrespect for a group of workers who are being denied basic rights is astounding to me. It just does not make sense!

However, I was pleasantly surprised by the work of the Negotiating Committee, especially during the arbitration process, and to see how good, smart, and hard-working people are, volunteering to do such a demanding job. The evidence that we were able to present at arbitration, the amount of research it represented... it is unbelievable! I must also acknowledge the contribution of Geoff Bickerton. His memory and his ability to find exactly what you are looking for are unimaginable!

Had the arbitrator's decision rested exclusively on the evidence, we would have won across the board. We have done a tremendous amount of work and we are very proud of it.

Q

What has been the most difficult part of your role as Chief Negotiator?

The hardest part was managing other people. As Chief Negotiator, you have to deal with conflicts and problems. When a group of people works crazy hours together over a long period of time and under tremendous stress, conflict is inevitable. You have to keep this in perspective and not take everything personally. You have to put yourself aside and think of the over 55,000 members you are working for.

Accepting arbitration was also difficult. Not being at the bargaining table and not being directly in the action has been hard.



Is there any aspect of the bargaining process that might surprise members?

Everything that is said in negotiation is written down. There is no room for error or improvisation, so there is a huge amount of work to be done to reach an accurate conclusion. There are many stages. It is a cumbersome process. And we use two languages. For a Francophone who is not perfectly bilingual, working in English requires a lot of intellectual effort.

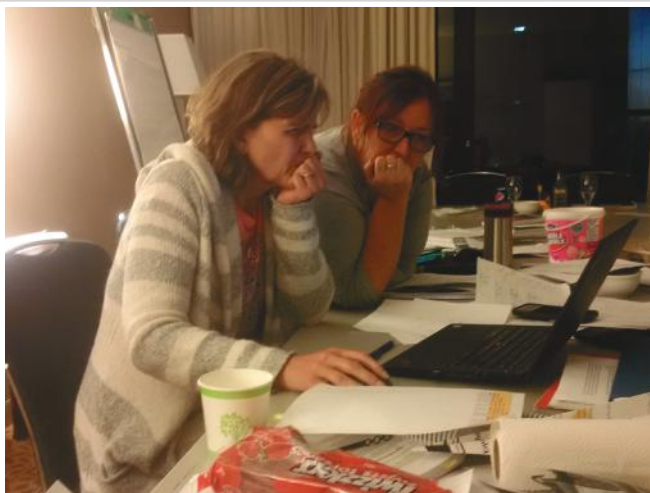
I think members may not understand the isolation created by the negotiation process. You become isolated from your family and you are in a stressful situation with the same group of people for months at a time, working non-stop, including weekends. You have no life. The minute you enter negotiations, you are putting yourself aside. You cannot plan anything because you are at the mercy of work and meetings.

I believe that logistics is an aspect of negotiations that remains abstract for members.



What is your greatest achievement? Your biggest disappointment?

My greatest achievement is pay equity, without a doubt. No matter what remains to be accomplished, there will never be anything as satisfying as the pay equity process. Barb, Cathy, Geoff and I believed in it so much. We worked so hard and we won on virtually every issue. We put \$550 million into the pockets of the RSMCs, 70% of whom are women. To finally have it recognized that our work is indeed equal to that of the urban unit, there were no words to describe my joy! The chances of being part of something this significant again are very slim.



We were a very small team: three sisters and one brother. We complemented each other so well. Cathy Kennedy with her expertise in legal texts and the way things work, and Barb McMillan with her incredible memory of all the procedures and how to manage the employer's data. We really did an incredible job. It is such an extraordinary pride, and no one can take that away from me. The road to achieving pay equity was long, but what a success it was!

Anything negative comes from the employer. How they refuse to bargain in good faith, and their closed-mindedness and propensity to stall and wait for special legislation. It is a difficult situation. There are members who are suffering because of overburdening or unpaid hours, among other things. The negative side has everything to do with the employer.

Let us just take the expansion of services as an example. Why is Canada Post saying no? It makes no sense. Our proposal is going to put money in the Corporation's coffers, but they are against it. The real problem is their stubbornness and closed-mindedness. It is hard to deal with an employer who is not receptive, especially when they do so without giving any reason.



Any advice for the next negotiators?

Be patient and prepared to work hard. Be kind to others. Bargaining is a team effort. It is collegial work, and you are working with a small group. You have to remember that you are here to do a job, not to make friends. You have to be strong.

Be prepared to make sacrifices, especially with your family. I missed my grandson's first birthday, and the same day we received the pay equity decision, my father, who was in intensive care, died overnight. You miss out on a lot of small things, and sometimes bigger things too. You have to be dedicated. I wish you good luck.

Is it rewarding? Absolutely! I am the kind of person who cannot just sit by and watch the train go by. But efforts do not guarantee success. You can work hard and be unsuccessful. It is rewarding, but on a personal level. I do not need to hear that I have done a good job. I know I gave it 100%.



When you join a union, you have two choices: sit back and let others fight for you, or stand up and be an active participant in change for the better. When 19-year-old Sylvain Lapointe joined CUPW in 1981, he chose the latter. From that day, until his official retirement last year, he never stopped fighting for the betterment of workers. He wore numerous union hats including Chief Negotiator for the Urban Operations Unit during the last two rounds of bargaining.

Sylvain Lapointe tells us why he joined the Union and what it's like in bargaining.



What motivated you to join the Negotiating Committee and become Chief Negotiator?

You have two choices when you join a union. You can see it as “insurance” and do nothing, hoping that everything is going to be okay. Or you can get involved and be a part of change and a force for progress. Those are your two choices. In a way, it is similar to a gym. You can pay your membership, but if you don't go in and train, nothing will change.

This has been my motivation since the beginning, in 1981, to get fully involved. I was young and there were things that I personally wanted to change in the organization. With time, you manage to change things. You get on the executive, you grow, you get more involved and you become part of the change to advocate for the membership. That's the choice I made.

We know that the employer is a big machine and it can be a very hard place, unfortunately. But you tell yourself that collective strength can make things better, and that's why you get involved.

There are a lot of puzzles and a lot of pressure. And there is little recognition. When you are part of a change, people may criticize and disagree. But you do your best and hope for the best outcome for members.

Of course, over the years, there have been some setbacks for CUPW and the membership, especially in 2011. But what would have happened had it not been for the union? Would we have all the conditions we currently have in our contracts? So we must always remember what things would be like if we did not have

such a strong union, despite some occasional setbacks. I am certain that we would not have a defined benefit pension plan, and we would not have the other benefits I mentioned.

Could the organization sometimes have done better? Perhaps. Nobody is perfect. But you don't join a negotiating committee to back down. You get involved with the firm intention of moving forward. That's your main intention. And since no one wants to fail, no one can question your motivation.



As Chief Negotiator, what has been the most difficult part of the last round of bargaining?

The hardest part is always to find how to reach your goal. This is not easy because you don't always end up following your initial path. You have to look at your different options. There is a lot of pressure. It's hard to be isolated and away from family, and to work so many hours day after day and week after week.

We also have to deal with the employer's closed-mindedness and sometimes totally inappropriate comments. The lack of respect that we've experienced in relation to the RSMCs is unbelievable. The employer's reluctance to pay a predominantly female group the same as a predominantly male group is hard to accept... it's unacceptable, in fact.

It was also very difficult for the Negotiating Committee to have our right, our power to bargain freely taken away through a back-to-work legislation, and to become tied up in an endless arbitration process with no way of predicting the results. Generally, you don't win with an arbitrator. But in 2020, we made gains.



Is there any aspect of the bargaining process that might surprise members?

The majority of the membership trusts the committee. I think that during this round of bargaining, we had to understand the frustration of the members. Until now, they were receiving the same salary that was in effect on January 31, 2018. Their last raise was on February 1, 2017. When the cost of living is going up but you don't have a wage increase, frustration grows. And we understood that. Three and a half years was a long time to wait for a salary increase.

I can see why members don't understand why the process takes so long. It's not normal to bargain for that long. The first meeting of the Negotiating Committee was in September 2017, and the arbitration award was issued on June 11, 2020. That's almost three years.

The arbitration process is not simple. It's a lot of work. There were 44 arbitration dates with witnesses, and the end of the process happened during COVID-19. So the last few days of hearings were done by videoconference, which was extraordinary and unheard of. It was not normal.

For members, lack of recognition from the employer sometimes turns into frustration towards the union. In the membership as a whole, there is not a lot of knowledge about arbitration. That's why the Negotiating Committee made a recommendation to the National Executive Board to provide training in order to explain the bargaining process to members.



If we set aside the long delays, the back-to-work legislation and the arbitration, what are the positive aspects of this last round of bargaining?

There are plenty of positive aspects. We moved forward. We did not go backwards. We won a decent wage increase in arbitration. For comparison, in an arbitration in Ontario, nurses only received one percent. We won protections for RSMCs against the use of contractors; plus the possibility to have replacements provided by the employer. For the urban unit, it is mostly studies in order to adapt the delivery system to accommodate letter carriers. We got things you don't normally get in arbitration. This is something positive.

The other positive side is the way the members fought in 2018. They had been on a rotating strike for 37 days as the holidays were coming. People followed the union's instructions to the letter. We fought well. It was a good

example of union solidarity and the members' unity. I was impressed. When we need to fight, the members are there. It makes all the difference. It's a great lesson and people should learn from it.



What were your greatest achievement and biggest disappointment throughout your career at CUPW?

I would humbly say that my greatest achievement has been to help. I often say that in a union, individual efforts are behind collective success. I am proud to have been involved for so long and to have overcome so many challenges. My greatest pride is to leave happy for being part of the movement, knowing that the next generation has been well prepared. I'm also glad I persevered and remained involved for so long. That's how I see it. I started as a shop steward in August 1981. I was very young. I was 19 years old and I never stopped. It's been a great journey.

What disappointed me the most was the bargaining of 2010 to 2012. It was heart breaking to tell the members everything we had to accept to save our pension. It's going to stay with me. It was a hard blow. When you work all your life, you hope to get to a decent pension that will give you financial security. It was crushing that in order to save our pension, we had to make all those sacrifices in a totally unfair system. And the arrogance of the Corporation in that process was spectacular, and I don't mean it in a good way.



Do you have any advice for people wanting to join the union, the Negotiating Committee, or who want to get involved?

My advice is to get involved gradually. Don't aim for the bargaining committee right from the start. Begin by walking the walk. Go to meetings. Take on the role of alternate steward, then become a shop steward. Familiarize yourself with the collective agreement and use it in real life to defend the members. The experience you gain over time will improve your chances when you apply for union positions at the executive level. Then, leverage that experience to end up on a negotiating committee eventually.

If you are patient and you learn well, your ideas will improve. You will know members better and you will know better how to defend them. You will know how the employer reacts to the collective agreement. All of this knowledge will be useful as you progress through the organization. You can make a difference even at the grassroots level. That's the best advice I can give to someone who wants to be on a bargaining committee one day.



IDLE NO MORE

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

JUNE 21, 2020

cupw•sttp

CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS

What's Happening in our Private Sector Bargaining Units

In the first issue of *Perspective*, we introduced many of our Private Sector Bargaining Units (PSBU) – the work they do, issues with their employers and what was going on in their respective collective bargaining.

It's important for the membership to know what's happening in all bargaining units and for that reason, we will continue to feature our PSBU's and their contract negotiations in every issue.

TForce Final Mile Bargaining – Ottawa Unit

In August 2020, the members of the Ottawa bargaining unit of TForce Logistics Canada Inc. voted 85 percent in favour of ratifying a new collective agreement. The final offer included numerous bonuses and a monthly safety allowance.

CUPW represents TForce workers in six different bargaining units across the country and we gave notice to bargain in December 2017. The Ottawa bargaining unit was the last to ratify a new contract.

Eazy Express – Burlington, Ontario

Eazy Express contract negotiations—their previous CA expired in August 2019—were delayed following the death of the company's owner. After Eazy Express was re-awarded the CUS contract for Burlington in April 2020, CUPW and the employer negotiated a new collective agreement. The agreement, ratified by the members in September, has improvements in wages and benefits.

Nova Scotia Medical Communications Local – Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia Medical Communications (NSMC) local, whose members are emergency medical services dispatchers in Dartmouth, NS remain in a process of conciliation with the employer. Meetings were held in early September 2020.

Bee Clean – St. John's NL (part of St. John's Local 126)

These workers were recently organized and are currently in bargaining for their first contract.

Pro-Ex Transportation (members in Annapolis Valley Local 006)

Pro-Ex is a CUS contractor in the Atlantic provinces. The current contract expired April 30, 2019 and we are in the process of applying for conciliation.



Correction – Perspective Magazine Winter 2020

It has come to our attention that a significant error was made in new issue of Perspective in the article entitled “Beyond the Postal Service – A Look at What’s Happening in our Private Sector Bargaining Units.”

Under the heading, Medavie Blue Cross, a distinction should have been made between the Nova Scotia Medical Communications (NSMC) local and the Medacom Atlantic workers who are part of the Charlottetown local. Although both locals are part of the health care sector and their parent company is Medavie Blue Cross, the members perform different duties and do not collectively bargain together.

The NSMC’s employer in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia is Emergency Care (EMC) Inc. and we are currently in conciliation. The members of the Charlottetown local work for Medacom Atlantic. Their collective agreement expires March 31, 2022.



Gig Workers Rise. Courts Listen. Are *Governments Next?*

It started with just a few people meeting in a park. Less than two years later, that small group, which had multiplied into hundreds of workers, became the first app-based workers in Canada to unionize successfully.

Along the way, these workers were met with challenges and roadblocks, doubters and naysayers, but they persevered, stuck together, and the victories began to accumulate. What the Foodora couriers and drivers, *foodsters* as they are called, and CUPW accomplished has the power to change the way gig workers are treated across the country.

Historic Firsts for the Labour Movement

Ten months after Foodora couriers and drivers in Toronto and Mississauga cast their ballots to unionize with CUPW, the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) finally tallied the votes. Although, CUPW and Foodsters United were confident that they had run a successful campaign, the day the votes were counted was filled with nervous energy. When the votes were finally counted, the results were overwhelmingly positive. *Foodora couriers voted almost 90 percent in favour of unionization with the CUPW.*

“Many doubted that workers in this era wanted or needed a union, says Ivan Ostos, a courier who worked on the unionization drive from the beginning. “Through conversations, companionship, and the dedication of hard working foodsters, we came together to achieve something many said was impossible.”

That the votes were even counted was also a historic win. At the heart of this unionization drive was a simple question: Do the couriers have the right to unionize? Foodora Canada and its parent company Delivery Hero were adamant that as independent contractors, the couriers had no right to unionize, but CUPW was clear that the *foodsters* were in fact misclassified by the company so it could side-step labour laws and avoid paying sick leave, fair wages, and upholding basic health and safety standards.

In February 2020, the OLRB ruled that Foodora couriers are dependent contractors, therefore closer to employees, and not independent contractors. This decision was precedent-setting, granting the workers the freedom to unionize.

“This decision shows that the tide is turning towards justice for thousands of gig workers in Ontario and soon these workers will have the right to their union,” said Jan Simpson, CUPW National President. “CUPW is proud to be part of challenging the big app-based employers, and reshaping the future of work in favour of workers’ rights, safety, and respect.”

Setbacks and Silver Linings

Soon after the OLRB decision, the world changed. As the country shut down and people were asked to stay home to try and limit the spread of COVID-19 infections, app-based workers like the *foodsters* were suddenly performing essential work.

And how were they rewarded? In April, Foodora announced it was closing the Canadian operations. The *foodsters* were shocked.

“One day you’re essential and the next you’re disposable,” says Ostos. “We worked through the pandemic, helped flatten the curve, and in return we lost our jobs and our income in the middle of a global pandemic. Workers deserve better. We deserve better.”

CUPW has not and will not stop fighting for the *foodsters*. As the pandemic hit, the workers mobilized to provide masks and hand sanitizer for each other. As the company left, the union instituted a Hardship Fund and partnered with Foodshare in Toronto to deliver food boxes to couriers out of work. We also negotiated a \$ 3.46 M settlement for Foodora couriers across the country, and will continue to fight for their bargaining rights if another employer acquires the Foodora Canada business.

Sign of Things to Come

It’s been an emotional year so far for the *foodsters*. They have broken so many barriers to become the first app-based workers in Canada to form a union. But the fight doesn’t stop here. There is a broader movement of people including CUPW who are working to end discrimination and disrespect of gig workers.

The work is paying off and the results are coming through the court system.

In June, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Uber drivers can settle disputes with their employer through the Ontario courts instead of through a costly, foreign arbitration process. This ruling opens up the possibility of Uber drivers being seen as employees instead of independent contractors.

“The Supreme Court’s decision was another win for gig economy workers in Ontario and across the country,” says Simpson. “With this decision, and the unionization drives by the Foodora couriers and the Uber Black drivers in Ontario, gig workers have made it clear that the status quo doesn’t work anymore, and CUPW was pleased to see the country’s highest court agrees.”

The status quo is indeed not good enough. Big app-based companies make a lot of money off the backs of workers without offering protections, health and safety, and proper pay. While the court decisions are step in the right direction, the work doesn’t end until changes are reflected in labour laws protecting all workers.



Investing in All Workers for a Better Future

The opening of the Warehouse Workers Centre (WWC) in the Peel Region in Ontario, is one of the ways CUPW is mobilizing a growing number of workers in the warehousing sector.

CUPW organizer Gagandeep Kaur is eager to reopen the Peel Warehouse Workers Centre. The Centre, open for only a few weeks before COVID-19 forced it to shut down, was becoming the go-to source of information regarding warehouse workers education, legislation, and rights in the Peel region.

“We were hit hard by the pandemic, but we’ve been trying to maintain and build on the connections we made while we were open,” says Kaur. The WWC was supported by several other worker organizations including the Toronto-based Workers’ Action Centre, when it launched in January 19, and quickly began to fill a clear need for advocacy, support, and resources.

Cheryl Craig, President, Peel Region Labour Council: “Workers across Ontario, including the Peel Region, have been hit hard by the effects of the pandemic. Unions continue to step up and support their members during these times, and the Workers Warehouse Centre in Brampton is an excellent example of that commitment. The Centre was up and running prior to COVID-19, so workers knew where to go for support when the crisis hit. Workers who lost hours or lost jobs during the pandemic, who had questions about their safety and their employer’s responsibilities, or who needed to know

how to apply for CERB or how to advocate for better workplace conditions – thanks to the WWC there was an easily accessible resource for them to lean on.”

Gagandeep remembers the confusion and the need for support. “[In March] there were workplace refusals happening, and people were confused about their rights and accommodations, how to refuse unsafe work, how to advocate for better conditions, and bring issues out into the open. Most of the warehouse workers that I know are stuck doing two or three jobs, and many have lost all their jobs in the pandemic.”

The Centre adjusted immediately, moving their trainings and information sessions online, at first once a week, and once the summer arrived, bi-weekly. Workshops focus on topics related to worker rights and health and safety for workers who hold unstable jobs in a quickly-changing and unpredictable environment. As demand for logistics work skyrocketed because of lockdown, and logistics delivery workplaces were made ‘essential,’ the WWC tried to inform workers about what all that means, and how to stay as safe as possible in the middle of it all. But at the same time Gagandeep found it frustrating not to be able to offer support in person.

CUPW is proud to support the WWC because it makes vital connections between our traditional membership, employed at Canada Post, and the post and logistics workers who are part of the same supply chain – making up a rapidly growing segment of the sector workforce, but under very different conditions.

In Peel, CUPW currently represents almost 4,000 members, most of whom are Canada Post employees, like Gagandeep, who is a full-time PO4 at the Gateway plant. But Peel's labour market overall – which includes Mississauga, Caledon and Brampton – has seen a big transformation in its labour market over recent decades. A growing share – almost half of the economy – is in the warehousing sector. As with the courier industry, the warehousing industry's labour practices and standards have an impact on all of us.

Meanwhile, in bargaining, we are resisting a trend at Canada Post Corporation to rely more on temporary workers than necessary. To fight precarious work within Canada Post, we've made a priority in bargaining to create mechanisms to maximize the creation of stable, full-time jobs, and a path for temporary workers to become regular part- or full-time. In a way, CPC is seeking the same kind of one-sided flexibility that we see in gig-economy employers. Working without guaranteed hours, at lower pay rates, and without access to the same benefits is not just something that happens outside of Canada Post. It concerns us all.

Gagandeep was introduced to CUPW's external organizing two years ago, when, as a shop steward, she helped organizers get signatures for petitions for minimum wage. When CUPW's external organizing department decided to devote resources to the funding of the Warehouse Workers Centre, she agreed to step up and help launch it with our staff organizers, and she's become its main spokesperson, working together with a few other CUPW members to meet the community's needs.

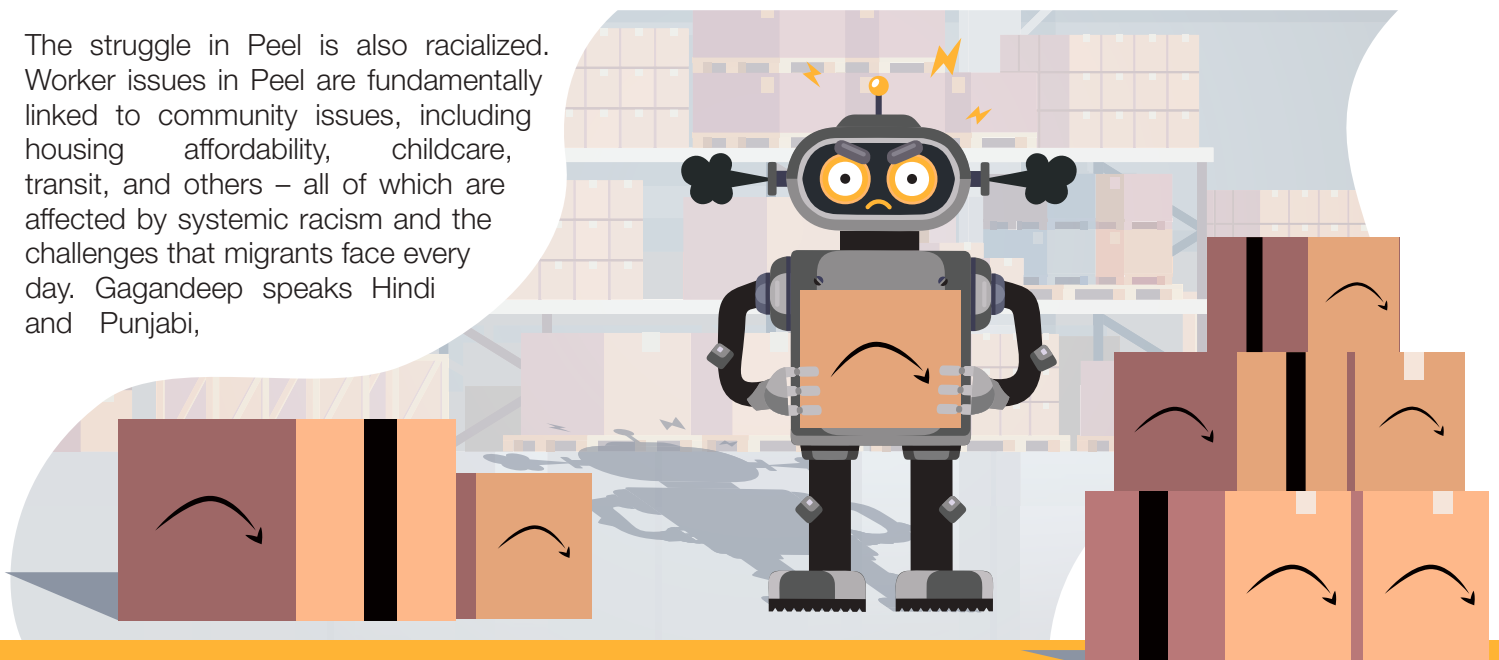
The struggle in Peel is also racialized. Worker issues in Peel are fundamentally linked to community issues, including housing affordability, childcare, transit, and others – all of which are affected by systemic racism and the challenges that migrants face every day. Gagandeep speaks Hindi and Punjabi,

which helps her connect with the significant South Asian community in Peel. Her background and experience – having lived in Canada for more than 20 years – give her extra insights into the network of forces that shape work in Peel. There are many dimensions and subtleties to her advocacy and research.

This is a model that has worked in the past. An organizing resource centre was key to reaching out to bike couriers in Toronto, and to same-day couriers in Winnipeg. It's a proven tactic for building community among co-workers who don't share a physical workplace.

We have to remember that in one way or another, all postal workers may someday face the same issues that gig workers are dealing with today, whether it's increased automation, the pace of technological change, or gaps in labour law that allow employers to exploit workers in new ways. In a sense, the Centre's work is CUPW's work, acutely focused on one region.

As much as the WWC has accomplished, Gagandeep and the other CUPW member-organizers have bigger ambitions for it. "I believe we could have done so much more if not for the pandemic," she adds. She feels that when the Centre is physically open again and begins to move past crisis mode, there is much to be accomplished. Her energy and the support of CUPW will be there for the workers of Peel. for the benefit of all workers in the sector, in pandemic recovery and beyond.



Just Recovery and Delivering Community Power

THE TIME FOR CHANGE IS NOW!

When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, nobody could have imagined what the following weeks and months would look and feel like.

While businesses shut down or reduced their staff, families continued to receive bills and face high interests imposed by the big banks. With social distancing, several services became vital – many of which were performed by low-paid workers in precarious conditions.

As we prepare to recover from this crisis, governments are making plans to stimulate the economy, what and how to reopen, and what will be financed. These decisions, that would normally be taken over years or decades, are now being crunched into a very small period of time, posing a unique opportunity for change.

Millions of people around the world are raising their voices to make clear that we do not want to go “back to normal.” There was nothing normal about the inequality that we faced heading into this crisis. There was nothing normal about putting profit over people, about making money at the expense of the survival of our planet, about exploiting vulnerable groups. The future, past COVID-19, must be different and better than this. We need a Just Recovery.

When CUPW launched Delivering Community Power (DeCoPo) in 2016, we envisioned the transformation of the post office. DeCoPo is our vision of a post office that ensures good paying jobs, that offers a variety of needed and valuable services to our communities,

contributes to Canada’s green economy, addresses the climate emergency, and preserves a most loved and needed public service.

This vision is in perfect alignment with the recovery that we want for Canada. In conjunction with over 150 other organizations, we are demanding a Just Recovery. This civil society movement calls governments to follow six principles that ensure we emerge from the crisis into a better future:

1

Put people’s health and wellbeing first, no exceptions.

2

Strengthen the social safety net and provide relief directly to the people who need it

3

Prioritize the needs of workers and communities

4

Build resilience to prevent future crises

5

Build solidarity and equity across communities, generations, and borders

6

Uphold Indigenous rights and work in partnership with Indigenous Peoples

The Six Principles for a Just Recovery

1. Put people's health and wellbeing first, no exceptions.

This first principle returns to the basics: health is a fundamental human right!

For years, the services and institutions essential to us all have suffered from decreased funding and austerity measures. We need to move in the opposite direction. Our health and social systems have to expand – they need to be public, culturally safe, linguistically appropriate, accessible, and must include anti-discriminatory processes so that regardless of where you live, your status or your circumstance, you are guaranteed support and adequate care.

We need our health and social services to be more resilient. In Canada and beyond, this means including Indigenous peoples living on and off reserves, people in remote communities, migrants, marginalized people, and undocumented people.

2. Strengthen the social safety net and provide relief directly to the people who need it

COVID-19 has made it pretty obvious that the people the most affected by the pandemic are those who live in smaller spaces, suffer from pre-existing health conditions, work precarious jobs, and of course, the elderly.

In all of the aforementioned cases – pre-existing services can help. A strong social safety net would ensure people have easy access to help whenever they need it, therefore decreasing the likelihood of them entering a crisis situation.

What are we asking the government to do? We want it to do its job of prioritizing redistributive policies and social services that meet the immediate and long-term needs of all people who are at a disadvantage because of social, economic, and wealth inequalities.

Delivering Community Power to All

Delivering Community Power syncs with Just Recovery principles. If we work together, we can properly change the systems that claim to look out for us but continue to fail us. We want our members to have safe, well-paid and decent jobs. This continues at the heart of what we do.

We believe that the public post office is needed now more than ever, as a means to provide services to people and places that were left behind by a changing world. As the largest retail network and fleet in the country, Canada Post can and should be used to implement relevant public policies that will help us emerge stronger from the COVID crisis.

We are seeing this happen in other countries. In France and Ireland, mail carriers are supporting vulnerable populations by checking on their wellbeing and linking them with social services when needed. In Australia, the post is connecting the elderly and high-risk people with their local pharmacy, allowing both social distancing and the continued operations of local businesses.

Canada Post, as a crown corporation operating from coast to coast to coast, should be a leader in the green economy. By transitioning to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), it can inspire other companies to do the same. By offering electric charging stations at its post offices, it would enable the creation of a reliable infrastructure that would allow electric vehicles to travel across Canada without the fear of running out of charge. This would facilitate both the purchase decisions of the users, as well as the development of the ZEV industry in Canada, creating more jobs and supporting the revitalization of the country's auto manufacturing sector.

3. Prioritize the needs of workers and communities

COVID-19 has made it obvious that the work we do, collectively, when we speak up and fight for workers' rights is essential to our society's wellbeing. Literally, postal workers, gig workers and private sector workers like couriers, cleaners and emergency medical dispatchers, allowed Canadians to flatten the curve and save lives.

We need policies that ensure support flows to all workers and communities. That means setting fair labour standards and giving workers the right to unionize.

No more bailout packages to greedy corporations. No more lining the pockets of CEOs and those who hide behind tax havens. No more.

4. Build resilience to prevent future crises

Reduced social and economic inequities protects vulnerable people from the unexpected.

From protecting the land, water, and air, to upholding human rights and the rights of Indigenous peoples – we can do so much better!

Decent jobs with decent pay will level the playing field, which in return will build a stronger economy that we can all benefit from. What are we waiting for exactly?

5. Build solidarity and equity across communities, generations, and borders

An injury to one is an injury to all. That's something those in the labour movement have been saying for a long time, but finally, it seems others have caught on. We have to use the momentum of the current situation to fight for resources, policies and systems that work to the benefit of everyone.

Indigenous Peoples, racialized groups, marginalized groups, and many others end up forgotten in such a profit driven system. A Just Recovery has to put principles of equity, solidarity, and sustainability across domestic and international relations at the forefront.

Human lives and human rights are NOT an afterthought. Canada has a responsibility to do better.

6. Uphold Indigenous rights and work in partnership with Indigenous peoples

2020 has brought to light the pain, damage, and destruction of band-aid solutions to racial injustice. Inclusion is not enough. It has never been enough and will never be enough. Rather, we must fight so that Indigenous rights are upheld at every level of society. We must ensure Indigenous Peoples are included and *lead* the discussions and conversations that affect them. Their participation must be in line with the standard of free, prior, and informed consent.

Indigenous Peoples require sustained resources and investments that stimulate *their* economies; they need healthy communities that respond to their cultural and spiritual needs as *they* define them, and they must always have lands and waters that are *theirs* and fully protected.

Investments in infrastructure, social and health services must recognize Indigenous sovereignty whereby they have control over their housing, water, food, and energy.



As the big banks continue to close down physical branches in smaller communities, postal banking offers a much-needed alternative to the families living in these places. It can provide vital services, allowing them to access money, small loans, open a savings account, and cash cheques without the expensive fees charged by pay-day lenders. These basic banking services are essential to financial inclusion.

Responding to our society's changing needs and providing services to people, wherever they are, is the key for Canada Post to remain a relevant public institution. This can be achieved by maintaining and creating good jobs while, at the same time, supporting Canada to enter the better future that we want post-COVID crisis. A future where public decisions are made to effectively fight climate change, build required infrastructure and social services, and promote resilience and social stability.

2020 is a year for the history books. A lot has happened, and many of us have been shaken by it all – but we are in this together. We have seen that, under pressure, governments can make quick changes and mobilize resources. Change is possible. Collective efforts yield results. We know this. Will you join us, as we demand change that leaves nobody behind?

Support your sisters, brothers and comrades by campaigning with us to uphold the principles of a Just Recovery and spreading the word of Delivering Community Power initiatives: sign a petition; share our information on your social platforms; set up or activate your environment committee at work; organize a DeCoPo webinar with CUPW's help; write a letter to your elected representatives; distribute flyers; get your community involved, or write an Op-Ed for your local newspapers – the ways to help are endless! The time for change is now!

DELIVERING COMMUNITY POWER and a JUST RECOVERY

COVID-19 has made the disparity in our communities clear, leaving many people isolated and unsupported. MPs have a responsibility to fix this for their constituents and our communities.

Visit **DeliveringCommunityPower.ca**
to send your MP an electronic letter.

**DELIVERING
COMMUNITY
POWER**

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Megan Whitfield

Labour Tribute





Labour leaders are strong, powerful individuals who are determined to make life better for working people. Sister Megan Whitfield fit that description to a T.

Megan was committed to improving the lives of postal workers, helping them find a strong, united voice and fight for their rights. Megan was President of CUPW Toronto local for two terms. In that capacity, she met with the employer, assisted thousands of CUPW members, defended workers' rights, and argued for a universal public postal service. Megan was everywhere — at meetings, on the work floor, on picket lines, and at demonstrations. As a labour leader Megan was clear — we, as a collective labour movement, must support and uplift people fighting for their rights everywhere.

Sister Whitfield lived by labour's motto that an injury to one is an injury to all. She believed that all workers deserve fairness, justice, and respect, and was involved in organizations outside the postal union. She was valued as an Executive member of the Ontario Federation of Labour, and sat on the anti-racism and human rights committees.

Sister Whitfield knew that some workers face additional barriers due to systemic racism. As a Black trade union woman, she understood that unless we tackle racism

and sexism, workers will never be truly equal. She was very involved in the Ontario chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Megan was a natural leader who was always very clear about her values and her role in the labour movement. She stood with regular people who needed help. She was passionate, but also very plainspoken and insightful. She was courageous and strong.

Sister Whitfield was the embodiment of the finest qualities of a trade union leader: passionate, dedicated, energetic, imbued with a set of values and a sense of judgment, knowledgeable, and bold.

She exemplified union activism and a thirst for knowledge. In her honour, CUPW has established a \$5,000 bursary to be awarded annually to a CUPW member—or their child—from an equity seeking group to attend university or college.

CUPW and postal workers from coast-to-coast-to-coast are stronger because of Megan Whitfield. The labour movement across the country is stronger because Megan argued for a powerful, inclusive, and anti-racist trade union movement. We are saddened by her untimely passing, but we will carry on her legacy and the work she was committed to doing.

**“In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist. We must be anti-racist.”
— Angela Davis**

Unionized Workers Must Fight Racism

We’ve seen the videos of unarmed Black and Indigenous people being murdered and attacked by police. We’ve witnessed a global uprising against police brutality and racial discrimination. We’ve heard the call to end white supremacy. Now many of us are asking: “What can I do?”

First things first: We must acknowledge what is happening in our own backyard. Systemic racism in our country is real and it runs deeper than we might imagine. Police brutality and racialized violence are only one facet. Organizations, governments, institutions, and individuals are uncovering some hard truths about deep-seated systemic racism, and the labour movement is no exception.

Unions Have their Own History of Racism

When unions were first established in Canada in the 19th Century, Black workers were not permitted to join.¹ It took almost 70 years for Canadian unions to accept Black workers. There is also a long history of union efforts to exclude Indigenous workers from employment in order to preserve jobs for non-Indigenous workers. And of course, historically, many unions worked hard to keep people of Asian descent from decent jobs.²

Unions should be a place where workers feel supported, and while we’ve made inroads, we must do more to change a system that continuously discriminates against BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour).

We need to move beyond rhetoric. Most unions, including CUPW, have some sort of anti-discrimination policies built into their constitutions, and have bargained similar collective agreement language with their employers. These legal articles are important, but how useful can they be when our unions and collective bargaining operate within a system that was created to promote racial discrimination?

The suggestion that society is racist can sound insulting, because if the country is racist, then its citizens themselves must be racist and full of hate. The offence taken at this is an obstacle to understanding the meaning of systemic racism.

Bringing up systemic racism can seem like an accusation. But systemic racism is not about individual attitudes. It is about how society works. Good people can participate in systemic racism on both conscious and unconscious levels.

That’s why it’s so important for all of us to have those uncomfortable conversations. Systemic racism, also known as institutional racism, refers to the ways that

white supremacy (that is the belief that white people are superior to people of other races) is reflected and upheld in the systems and institutions of our society.

Unpacking systemic racism involves focusing on how our *society* operates rather than focusing on *individual* biases and behaviours. It's about the system that creates unequal outcomes for many Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour. This includes but is not limited to our education systems, our healthcare systems, and our criminal justice system (including the courts, the police and the correctional system). These are the very institutions that guide how we live collectively, speak to our society's structure, establish how we come to make decisions, and stipulate what is fair or just.

Because these systems were a product of colonial practices, they were built with an already ingrained bias and racist lens, which established processes by which to discriminate against people of colour. Such processes are the very opposite of what would be needed for racialized people to have equal or fair opportunities. And while we do have a Charter of Rights, exacting protections typically means a lengthy and expensive court battle. In other words, most workers, and especially racialized workers, do not have the time or the means to have their rights upheld.

For the anti-racism movement to be successful, white and white passing people need to step up. It's not enough to post a black square on social media for a day. Now is the time to get uncomfortable, to confront inherent biases, to dig deep and see how you might have contributed to the problem either willingly or unwillingly. Only when we educate ourselves will we be able to dismantle racist systems and institutions, and rebuild a fair and equitable

society.

Being an Ally

Solidarity means supporting each other. In recent months, you may have heard the term “ally.” This is an important element in being part of the solution.

An ally is someone who supports and advocates for others. Allyship is more than just tolerance—it means actively trying to break down the barriers and create better circumstances for others, including marginalized people.

In the workplace, people can face prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and harassment. This particularly affects racialized and marginalized groups. By being an ally, you are helping to create a work environment where your co-workers can be healthy, happy, safe, productive, and empowered.

Challenging racism and oppression in your workplace can be difficult. By taking a stand, you are not only making your work environment better and safer for your racialized coworkers, you are also setting a positive example for your non-racialized coworkers to follow.

The most important thing you can do is to become informed and challenge assumptions. Don't wait for a racialized person to tell you what to do. You need to be pro-active.

It starts with hard work from ourselves. It's the first step towards a better world.

Unions can be an effective way for BIPOC and their allies to come together and make their voices heard. Together, we can create anti-racist unions and an equitable world for all.



1. Rouillard, J., et al. (2006, 2015). "Working-Class History" in, *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/working-class-history>.

2. PSAC "Charting Our History: A chronology of racialized workers in Canada and the laws that impact them" <http://psacnorth.com/sites/north/files/rv-racializedunion.pdf>



US Postal Workers Face Double Trouble: Trump and COVID

Over the last few months, postal workers around the world have faced the challenge of providing valuable services to the public while coping with the dangers presented by the COVID-19 virus. But American postal workers face additional threats, namely Donald Trump's election strategy, the control of the Senate by right-wing Republicans, and the actions of Trump's newly appointed Postmaster General.

COVID Strikes Deep

The spread of COVID-19 has been particularly widespread and deadly in the United States and postal workers have not been spared from its deadly impact. While the numbers are constantly changing, about 2,400 American postal workers have tested positive for COVID-19 and tragically, more than 60 have died. Were it not for the strong actions taken by the American postal unions in ensuring proper safety measures, the numbers of infections and fatalities could have been much higher.

COVID-19 has also had a very negative impact on the financial well-being of the United States Postal Service (USPS). Like all postal administrations, the spread of

COVID-19 has resulted in very significant reduction of letter mail volumes. While parcel deliveries have increased, the USPS faces considerable competition from large US-based parcel delivery companies including UPS, FedEx, and many other national and regional carriers.

Trump's Attacks Intensify

Since his election in 2016, US President Donald Trump has repeatedly attacked the postal service. He has lied about the financial situation of USPS, argued for massive price increases that would reduce mail volumes, and spread "fake news" to support his arguments for postal privatization. Currently, he is regularly repeating his false claim that voting by mail will lead to fraud of a massive scale enabling the Democrats to "steal" the election.

DeJoy Creates Delays

To ensure that the quality of postal services would dramatically decline prior to the election, Trump appointed Louis DeJoy as Postmaster General. Ever since his appointment in May 2020, DeJoy, who donated over \$1 million to Trump's election campaign and more to the Republican Party, has behaved as a one-man wrecking crew, cutting overtime, reducing hours of service and changing delivery standards to permit the delay of mail.

DeJoy has asserted that service reductions were necessary to reduce costs, but Mark Dimondstein, President of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) fully rejects this idea. “That whole concept is an insult to postal workers who are a hardworking, dedicated group.”

Fredric Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) summed up the impact of the Trump-inspired cutbacks as follows: “As they risk their health each day along with other front-line essential workers, letter carriers have become angry, frustrated and embarrassed by various USPS management initiatives that are now resulting in delayed mail and undelivered routes in many areas of the country.”

A petition on Moveon.Org, calling for Congress to pass legislation providing proper funding for the USPS, supported by Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, has gathered over 450,000 signatures, and the former has called for DeJoy to be immediately removed from office.

On August 7, 2020, in order to stop opposition by longtime postal managers, DeJoy presided over what has been described as the “Friday Night Massacre” which saw 23 key management executives reassigned or displaced. Trump’s takeover of postal management is now complete.

Unions Fight Back

The major postal unions in the United States are mobilizing their members, the public, and progressive politicians to fight back against the DeJoy cutbacks and the Trump falsehoods. They are also supporting viable new revenue-generating services and promoting operational changes that would make the USPS a leader in efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions and safeguard the environment. Both unions have been very active in promoting the establishment of a national postal bank as a means of providing financial services and improving financial inclusion for the public as well as increasing revenues for the USPS.

On the environmental front, the unions have been working with allies to support the “Moving America Forward Act.” This Act, which has been passed by the US House of Representatives, calls for a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure bill that invests in roads, rail, public transit, ports, aviation, energy and water. The final bill included \$25 billion for postal infrastructure modernization,



including \$6 billion to upgrade postal vehicles. The bill requires that 75 percent of the new fleet be electric or zero-emission vehicles. For medium/ heavyweight vehicles, the electric/zero emissions requirement would be 50 percent by 2030 and 100 percent by 2040. The bill would require the “Buy America Act” provisions with regards to vehicle procurement. The bill also would equip each postal facility with electric charging stations, at least one of which would be made available to the public, officers and employees of the Postal Service.

CUPW and our American Allies

CUPW and the American postal unions are continuing a long tradition of mutual support. Since many technological changes have originated in the USPS, CUPW has been able to learn much about postal mechanization in the plants and the impact of sequencing of letter carrier delivery.

American postal union leaders and activists have testified at CUPW arbitrations, participated in our education programs and spoke at our conventions. James Sauber, Chief of Staff of the NALC, organized over 30 American Unions to support our NAFTA side accord challenge demanding bargaining rights for RSMCs. For decades CUPW and the NALC and APWU have shared research and educational materials on issues such as technological change, health and safety, postal banking, and the environment. Our unions work closely at UNI, our global union, to which we are all affiliated. We owe much to the solidarity of our Sisters and Brothers from the United States and in the near future we are hoping to increase our contact and joint activities with them.



PRIDE AND

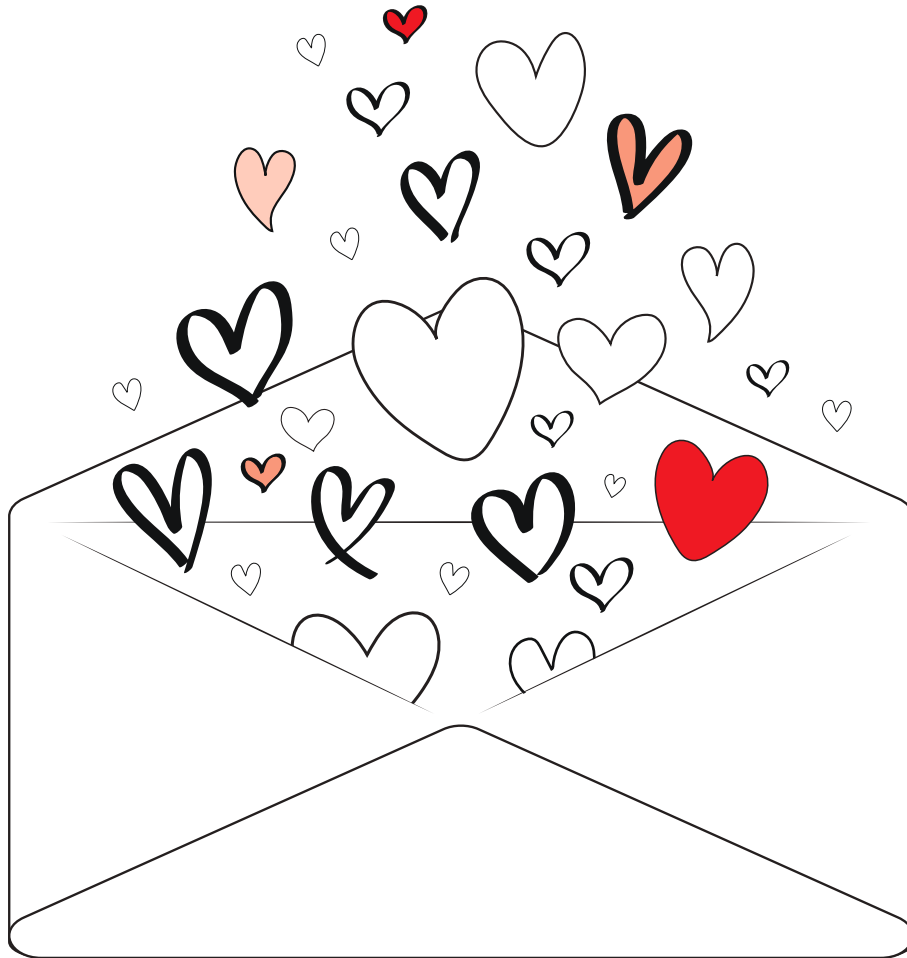
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