

PERSPECTIVE

MAGAZINE



Building Worker Power





**DELIVERING
COMMUNITY
POWER**

Reimagine Canada Post

Postal banking

A fleet of electric vehicles

Affordable food delivery

High-speed internet

Elder check-ins

Learn more:

DeliveringCommunityPower.ca

cupw•sttp
Canadian Union of Postal Workers

f facebook.com/DeCoPo.CollectivitesDurables

@ [@DeliverComPower](https://twitter.com/DeliverComPower)



Table of Contents

President's message	3
Building Worker Power	4
Meet Your Regional Organizers	6
Post 2 Post	13
CUPW Equity Audit	14
Let's Talk about Sex...	16

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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

Communication is a two-way street!

We want to hear your stories and concerns – what do you have to say to the rest of the CUPW membership? You can submit your letters to the editor, opinion pieces, feature ideas and other thoughts to feedback@cupw-sttp.org or to CUPW Perspective, 377 Bank Street, Ottawa ON, K2P 1Y3.



CUPW PERSPECTIVE

Published in English and French by
the Canadian Union of Postal Workers,
377 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1Y3
Tel: (613) 236-7238 Fax: (613) 563-7861
www.cupw-sttp.org

Letters to the editor are welcome.

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

Editor: R. Schmidt

Production and translation: C. Benoit, A. Boulet, J.-R. Gaudreau,
G. Laflamme, L. Meloche, M. Chenal & M. Prévost

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

Contributors: D. Forman, J. Simpson & E. Tobin

Affiliations:

- Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM)
- Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)
- UNI Global Union
- International Transport Workers Federation (ITF)
- Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ)

LETTERS POLICY

CUPW Perspective welcomes letters to the editor. We will print any letters from a CUPW member provided it:

- is 400 words or less. Union members may submit longer items for consideration as commentary pieces.
- 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.

We accept letters by mail, fax and electronic mail.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCTION



Perspective is printed on Rolland EnviroSatin (70 lb). This paper contains 100% post-consumer fibre, is manufactured using renewable energy - Biogas and processed chlorine free. It is FSC® Ancient Forest Friendly™ certified.



CUPW eDigest



Stay connected. Stay informed.
Sign up @ cupw.ca/cupw-eDigest

cupw•sttp

CUPE-SCFP 1979



cope225sepb.ca



A Message from your President

The last three years have been challenging for everyone, but through it all, I find solidarity and strength from postal and private sector bargaining unit workers who continue to be there for the public and each other.

In 2022, many COVID restrictions were lifted, and as a result, National Executive Board members were able to visit workfloors for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. While we were able to connect virtually over the last few years, there is nothing more rewarding than talking to members face to face on the workflow. I look forward to meeting more of you in 2023.

We're currently preparing for the CUPW National Convention, which will take place May 1 to 5 in Toronto, Ontario. We'll report on the Union's activities over the last four years and delegates will get to the opportunity to share any concerns and plan the work of the Union for the next four years. Resolutions will be voted on following a democratic debate and updates will be made to CUPW's National Constitution. Delegates will also elect the Officers that will make up the National Executive Board and the Regional Executive Committees, and will also elect National Union Representatives.

This new year brings new and existing challenges: the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect our work, we are experiencing a time of economic hardship as the cost of living continues to skyrocket, and we are fighting against the rise of low wage, insecure, and non-union competition in parcel delivery from Amazon and other private sector competitors. We are also getting ready for another round of bargaining for the RSMC and Urban Units, as well as some of our Private Sector Bargaining Units.

Bargaining with Canada Post has never been easy, which is why we've already started to prepare. An organizing campaign called *Building Worker Power* was launched last fall to build our collective strength to be ready for bargaining. Regional Organizers have been selected and trained and they've already begun holding workflow meetings and training more members in workplace organizing.

Canada's labour movement was built by workers coming together and organizing, mobilizing, and sometimes even striking, for fairness and justice. The victories

of the labour movement over the years – minimum wages, overtime pay, workplace safety standards, maternity and parental leave, vacation and sick pay, protections against harassment and discrimination – all came to be because workers unified and mobilized around a plan to win.

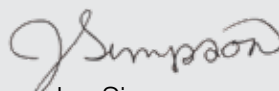
Today, unions, including CUPW, work hard every day to protect the rights we've won, and to win new rights for all workers. Employers are increasingly forgoing good faith bargaining, preferring to wait for governments to pass back-to-work legislation and impose a contract on workers. Postal workers know this all too well.

The labour movement should be a place of hope. We build hope through our collective power, and we build social and workplace change when we stand united. Our best defence to all this adversity is solidarity. The uncertainty around us makes it more important than ever for all workers to unite and demand better. This is why the union exist. This is why worker democracy is so critical to a brighter future.

In this edition of *Perspective*, you'll learn more about *Building Worker Power*, meet the Regional Organizers, get an update from the National Human Rights Committee and the National Women's Committee, and read about CUPW's international solidarity efforts and why they are an important part of building sustainable unions worldwide.

We have a busy year ahead of us. We will meet many challenges. But we will face them together.

In Solidarity,



Jan Simpson
National President



Building Worker Power

Our Plan to Win!



Our union is only as strong as our members are unified around a goal and organized to achieve that goal. The *Building Worker Power* (BWP) campaign is the first time since 1988 that our union is fully committing itself to a deep organizing model of empowering our members to assert ourselves on our own workfloors. Only by developing our organizing confidence locally can we build toward our ultimate goal of making fair collective bargaining the path of least resistance for both Canada Post and the government.

Our Plan to Win

This is an incredibly ambitious campaign to change the very culture of our union, but this change will not be possible unless we see our situation clearly. Currently, our members mostly rely on, and expect, our leadership to prevent the boss from violating our rights. No matter how much of themselves our leaders dedicate toward representing our members, this top-down, individual-reliant approach will never be enough to prevent or put out the thousands of fires deliberately set all around us by the boss. Only our collective power as workers has a chance at winning.

First, we need to tell our members the reality of our situation, and how we need their help to turn things around. Whether its brutally low turnout for important contract votes, anemic picket lines, or a general lack of participation in many Locals, our union is nowhere close to being ready to do what is necessary in order to win. We must accept this and proceed accordingly. To this end, the BWP campaign has appointed Regional Organizers across the country. Their role is to visit as many Locals as they can, to hold workfloor meetings in as many facilities as they can to promote this campaign, update our contact lists to send campaign updates, and, most importantly, recruit workfloor captains to help further grow our capacity to fight.

Finding Direction

By visiting every facility, we meet members directly where they are at; by recruiting captains in every facility, we establish an activist network where our challenges can be shared within and across different Locals and Regions, and coordinated into larger actions. Bad restructures and short-staffing are happening everywhere; what happens if we got every Local with the same problem together to coordinate training and

a fight back strategy? Every visit and collected contact is logged to create a map of our progress. This map allows us to see where we've visited and had success recruiting, and where we need to still go and do more work.

Mass Education

Workfloor organizing, just like any other complex skillset, must be consistently nurtured and supported to be successful. No one is expected to feel comfortable or confident organizing a workfloor with no previous experience. Our Regional Organizers have been trained to assist Locals in running a one-day course designed specifically for this campaign to give members willing to take a stand all the tools they'll need to effectively organize their own workfloor, such as:

- How to identify widely and deeply felt issues to organize around
- Identifying and recruiting other activists and leaders
- Building a team of collaborators to hold effective workfloor meetings
- Extensive roleplaying of confrontations with management
- Forming demands and escalating job actions based on realistic organizing capacity

The more members that know about the plan, the more members that will take the course; the more members that are armed with the skills, the more likely it is our members will begin collectively asserting their rights. Only by confronting lower levels of authority in these early days in modest, accessible ways, can we take the first small steps in building our confidence to one day take on the necessary battles ahead to win our negotiation demands or face down back-to-work legislation.

A Structured Approach

Effective organizers do not over-promise and do not take on fights they do not have a good chance of winning. By mapping our Locals and recruiting captains, we establish a foundation by which we can conduct periodic tests of our capacity to coordinate and fight. We run these tests so that when we pick a real fight, we will be doing so knowing exactly how strong we are and how far we are capable of going.

If all it took for workers to win the day was a well written bulletin or a bombastic speech, the world would not be as unjust as it is, and our lives would be a lot better. This serious undertaking to build our capacity to fight properly must be methodical and relentless if we hope to have any chance of success.

An example of a structure test we may see in the next few months would be a petition demanding no government interference in our upcoming round of collective bargaining. To be clear, petitions don't typically create meaningful change; the point of a petition in this context is to see how many members have been engaged by the BWP campaign and are willing to respond to the smallest of asks. By launching a National petition like this and asking our Regional Organizers, Local, and Workfloor Captains to help collect signatures, we will get an accurate picture of how much solidarity has been built among our members, and what specific Local, facilities, and shifts we need to keep growing our forces.

Stronger Together

After decades of bad contracts, back-to-work legislation, and two nightmare years of the pandemic, our members are losing patience with their job getting worse and financially falling behind. This campaign is about taking all the frustration accumulating on our workfloors, bringing it together from every Local, and constructively focusing it into a 60,000 strong movement for change.

If you haven't done so already, Local Executives should contact their respective Regional Organizer to schedule days they can visit the Local to do workfloor visits promoting the campaign and arrange days to run the organizer training. Members can help by visiting the BWP website to sign-up for campaign updates, by contacting their Local Executives to make them aware of the need for this campaign to become active in their Local, or by volunteering as a workfloor captain. This campaign can work but only to the extent that our members get involved. More hands make lighter work.

In solidarity,



Roland Schmidt
3rd National Vice-President



Sign up to join the campaign on our website: bwp.cupw.ca

Meet Your Regional Organizers

Atlantic

Name:
George Nickerson

Local:
**054 Fredericton/
Oromocto**

Years working at
Canada Post: **33**



Q) What made you decide to get involved in this campaign?

- A) I have done many campaigns for CUPW, and I have been talking about the need for a campaign to engage the membership for many years. I'm so pleased we are finally doing one.

Q) How did you first become involved in organizing in your workplace?

- A) It is something I have always believed in, and it just sort of happened many years ago.

Q) Who or what inspires you to do this work?

- A) The continued failures at the bargaining table inspired me to do this work so that a united membership can break this cycle.

Q) What advice can you give to workers who want to get involved in organizing and building collective power on the work floor and in the Union?

- A) Speak with your Local Executive as well as your co-workers on a daily basis about how important it is to be united so we can gain back what we've lost and improve our working conditions.

Q) What is the most pressing issue facing postal workers today?

- A) The continued attacks on the postal service by government.

Q) When you're not working or building up the labour movement, what do you do for fun?

- A) I like to spend time with my children and grandchildren, I am a big baseball and football fan - Go Red Sox and Patriots! I also love spending time with my partner Ruth and our Golden Doodle, Lloyd.

Q) If you weren't a postal worker, what would you be doing instead?

- A) I have no idea to be honest.

Q) Three things you can't live without

- A) My partner, my dog and coffee.

Quebec

Name:
Richard Martin

Local: **Vaudreuil-
Dorion 255**

Years working at
Canada Post: **13**



Q) What made you decide to get involved in this campaign?

- A) I've always been interested in union mobilization. I am very inspired by people who take matters in their own hands, and I wanted to be part of this movement, this way of defending the best interest of workers.

Q) How did you first become involved in organizing in your workplace?

A) The first time I organized in my workplace was during the 2011 lockout. It was a simple action. The postal workers and I were on the picket line, and I suggested we walk to the office of our federal member of parliament. People thought it was a great idea, and we ended up talking about our issues with the MP.

Q) Who or what inspires you to do this work?

A) I am inspired by great historical figures and great reading. David-Henry Thoreau, Martin Luther King, or Gandhi, but I am also inspired by everyone who participates in rallies or in floor actions. It moves me every time I see the collective power of people coming together to improve life in our communities.

Q) What advice can you give to workers who want to get involved in organizing and building collective power on the work floor and in the Union?

A) There are thousands of ways to get involved! Talk to your local executive and remember that no action is too small, it's the collective effort that is the most important force of the union.

Q) What is the most pressing issue facing postal workers today?

A) I believe that postal workers, like other workers, are facing many issues. That includes financial, generational, environmental, and social injustices. I believe workers, in general, have the solutions and the willingness to address these issues. What we really need to work on is building our power to truly reach our highest aspiration as a collectivity.

Q) When you're not working or building up the labor movement, what do you do for fun?

A) I love playing board games, or video games. I also spend a lot of time reading books. I like political, philosophical, and economical essays. I also read novels.

Q) If you weren't a postal worker, what would you be doing instead?

A) I had many different jobs before becoming a postal worker. I was animal curator in a zoo for five years. I also managed a small board game shop for five years. I would really like to get involved in politics one day.

Q) Three things you can't live without.

A) Books, animals, and loved ones, not necessarily in that order.

Metro-Montreal

Name:
Théa Bashore

Local:
350 Montreal

Years working at
Canada Post: **3**



Q) What made you decide to get involved in this campaign?

A) It is clear that CUPW, like the vast majority of Canadian unions, is not at its full potential. We have an impressive track record—the strike for maternity leave, the defiance of special legislation, the unionization of RSMCs—but these victories required a level of organization and solidarity that we don't currently have. *Building Worker Power*

aims to develop well-organized, united work floors and prepare members to take action to defend and advance our rights. By educating and supporting our members in the workplace, we can achieve real progress and gain strength against the employer and the government.

Q) How did you first become involved in organizing in your workplace?

A) Before Canada Post, I was involved in several organization campaigns in various companies. I was not always successful, but one of these companies just adopted its first collective agreement.

Q) Who or what inspires you to do this work?

A) The world is unfair, and the only way to get the working and living conditions we deserve is to organize and force those in power to give them to us; whether it's an employer or the government, we must show that we are ready and willing to fight to improve our conditions.

Q) What advice can you give to workers who want to get involved in organizing and building collective power on the work floor and in the Union?

- A) The social bond between workers is at the centre of organization. Members who want to be involved in internal organizing must therefore listen to their brothers and sisters and motivate them to act. At its core, effective organizing requires empathy and respect for our fellow workers.

Q) What is the most pressing issue facing postal workers today?

- A) Separate sort and delivery leaves us less time to talk to coworkers, and therefore less time to build the social bond that is essential to organizing. This time has already been diminished by the elimination of common lunch breaks and mail

sequencing. I believe that this is an employer tactic to directly weaken our ability to organize and defend against attacks on our working conditions.

Q) When you're not working or building up the labour movement, what do you do for fun?

- A) I hike in the mountains, mostly in the Laurentians and New York State, and practice Thai boxing on weekends.

Q) If you weren't a postal worker, what would you be doing instead?

- A) High school teacher or electrician.

Q) Three things you can't live without?

- A) Good coffee, my two cats and my partner.

Toronto

Name:
Mary Hylton

Local:
Toronto 626

Years working at
Canada Post: 35



Q) What made you decide to get involved in this campaign?

- A) I decided to get involved in this campaign after reviewing the job duties. A spark went off in my head which made me believe I would be able to connect with our members effectively on an organizing level.

Q) How did you first become involved in organizing in your workplace?

- A) I got involved first as a Shop Steward, and then as a Chief Steward. Once my children were grown, I could give one hundred percent to the Union, and I've been deeply involved for the last 25 years.

Q) Who or what inspires you to do this work?

- A) It's our membership that inspires me to do the work. We all put in a 100 percent effort while on the job, yet sometimes we get pushed around and disrespected by our employer who often think we will be too defeated, too tired to push back. But the employer is making a mistake because we have inspired activists, like myself and others, who will make sure our members' voices are heard, and we will challenge all unfair and unjust behaviour from our employer.

Q) What advice can you give to workers who want to get involved in organizing and building collective power on the workforce and in the Union?

- A) It would be me seeking advice from other workers because they know their workforce better than anyone else. I would let them know my role and capacity as an organizer. I seek to know the challenges and hardships they face and what worked and what didn't work.

Never surrender in the fight because every worker's voice is important and must be heard. Everyone has a role to play as we move forward in a collective way to identify and implement an organizing plan of action to be able to achieve positive change.

Q) What is the most pressing issue facing postal workers today?

A) There are lots of pressing issues for us as postal workers: increased workload, harassment and bullying, workplace violence, to name a few. The workers on the floor know the pressing issues, the ones that need to be addressed immediately and it's important for me to listen to their voices.

Q) When you're not working or building up the labour movement, what do you do for fun?

A) I do believe in the importance of self-care when not working. I go for hikes with my partner. I have play time with my grandson. I go to my cycle-fit class, which isn't always fun. I spend time gardening.

Q) If you weren't a postal worker, what would you be doing instead?

A) If I wasn't a postal worker, I would instead be a social worker because I'm a people person.

Q) Three things you can't live without

A) My family. My iPhone. My voice.

Central

Name:
Cristina Ionescu

Local:
580 Ottawa

Years working at
Canada Post: **7**



Q) What made you decide to get involved in this campaign?

A) I have been actively involved in organizing my own depot and we have had our fair share of success. The thought of being able to do it at a larger scale and empowering members to win bigger battles made me passionate about joining this campaign.

Q) How did you first become involved in organizing in your workplace?

A) When I first became a shop steward, I thought I could do it all and solve everyone's problems. It didn't take long to realize that I needed the help and support of my co-workers, and we needed to stand together in our fights against management.

Q) Who or what inspires you to do this work?

A) Looking back at the history of CUPW and the great achievements we've had in the past, I believe that if we bring back the energy and the real solidarity that once made us strong, we can accomplish great things, just like the activists before us did.

Q) What advice can you give to workers who want to get involved in organizing and building collective power on the workfloor and in the Union?

A) I personally think that it's a fantastic campaign, long overdue, but now is a better time than ever to join, so we can start winning our battles and prepare for successful bargaining.

Q) What is the most pressing issue facing postal workers today?

A) The most pressing issue facing postal workers today is the constantly declining mail volume and the need to expand services, so we can keep our jobs, benefits, and pensions and be able to pass them to future generations.

Q) When you're not working or building up the labour movement, what do you do for fun?

A) I love spending time with my family and friends and enjoy hot summer days by the pool.

Q) If you weren't a postal worker, what would you be doing instead?

A) I have always been fascinated by all the different cultures and traditions and, if I would have the time and money, I would love to travel around the world.

Q) Three things you can't live without

A) Sweets (I have a sweet tooth), the sun (summer is my favourite season, no matter how hot it is) and my watch (it doesn't necessarily mean that I am always punctual, but I feel lost if I'm not wearing it).

Ontario

Name:
Asim Malik

Local:
566 London

Years working at
Canada Post: 17



Q) What made you decide to get involved in this campaign?

- A) Hope and potential. I've always appreciated the personal effort and sacrifice that others have put into our Union, but never quite felt like I knew where my place in the Union was. I think this campaign was the reminder I needed that a union is a collective, and that ultimately, our strength is in our numbers and in our solidarity. It can be easy to take for granted, but we're fortunate to belong to a union with the history and the membership that CUPW has. We've taken some hits in the time I've been a member, and it can feel daunting knowing that both the Conservatives and Liberals will legislate us back to work instead of letting us have our freedom to bargain for our own lives, but if 60,000 workers unite and stand together, that's a force that can't be ignored. I want to do my part to help us all remember that.

Q) Who or what inspires you to do this work?

- A) Workers. Especially those who struggle, who are underpaid and/or overworked. I was hired before the 2011 back-to-work legislation and the two-tier wage contract that was forced on us. I want to do the best I can in this campaign for all of us, but especially for those who are paid less even though they do the same work, sometimes even harder work when seniority comes into play. I know we have to start somewhere, but in the long run, I hope the efforts we can make with this campaign will extend beyond CUPW and make the lives of all workers better. The rich get richer, the poor get poorer, and I think more of us are starting to understand what kind of world we're living in. We need to look out for each other and find strength, and results, in our numbers.

Q) What advice can you give to workers who want to get involved in organizing and building collective power on the workforce and in the Union?

- A) Do it! Talk to your friends, your coworkers, your local membership. The more we talk, the more we realize we're experiencing a lot of the same issues and hardships. The *Building Worker Power* campaign is about getting reengaged with each other and how to deal with what we face at work and in life every day. The BWP course was built to help us organize and find our collective voice again. Let your local know you're interested in taking the course, and get them to sign up for it too!

Q) What is the most pressing issue facing postal workers today?

- A) I'm not sure how to pick just one. Back-to-work legislation means we don't have the freedom to bargain the way we're supposed to. Inflation means our wages aren't worth nearly as much as they used to be. The profit motive means the employer will keep trying to change how we do things and keep trying to chip away at what we have to keep more money in corporate pockets. Climate change is happening and will disrupt our lives more and more in the coming years. I couldn't possibly think of all the different issues that affect all 60,000 postal workers across the country, but I know that 60,000 of us have a better shot at standing our ground and changing things for the better than any one of us can hope to accomplish on our own.

Q) When you're not working or building up the labour movement, what do you do for fun?

- A) Reading, gardening, video games, hanging out with my partner, Liz.

Q) If you weren't a postal worker, what would you be doing instead?

- A) In my fantasy dream world, I'm a part time community farmer, part time philosophy nerd! I love learning new ideas and ways of thinking, and if it were possible, I'd love to spend my days growing food for the people and philosophizing with some other nerds like me!

Q) Three things you can't live without

- A) Community. Love. Ice cream?

Prairie

Name:
James Ball

Local:
730 Edmonton

Years working at
Canada Post: **8**



Q) What made you decide to get involved in this campaign?

- A) When I read the notice about the *Building Worker Power* campaign, I applied immediately. I have been involved with the “taking back the workflow” program from Edmonton. I have used the skills I learned successfully in depots in Edmonton, and I am excited about using these same skills with the members across the Prairie region.

Q) How did you first become involved in organizing in your workplace?

- A) I must have been making enough waves in my amateur attempts at enforcing our collective rights in my depot to be invited to attend an informal meeting at a pizza shop in Edmonton. There, I met people with a plan.

Q) Who or what inspires you to do this work?

- A) I’m inspired to do this work because I know it is effective at defending our rights on the workflow and making the lives of our members better. The last shopfloor meeting I held during a restructure was entirely run by the members and that was something to see. I felt real pride in my depot. I hope to help create that feeling in our members everywhere.

Q) What advice can you give to workers who want to get involved in organizing and building collective power on the workflow and in the Union?

- A) Take time to build relations with the people in your work area. Speak to each other. The boss tries to stop people from communicating because we are powerless when isolated. When we speak to each other, we can discover that our struggles are not so different and that we can solve those struggles when we come together.

Q) What is the most pressing issue facing postal workers today?

- A) It’s my belief that the most pressing issue is our lack of engagement. We can identify issues like job cuts, automation, legislation, but if we aren’t engaged with each other, we won’t be able to stand up and fight these things.

Q) When you’re not working or building up the labour movement, what do you do for fun?

- A) I’m a man of many hobbies. Photography, video games, karaoke, I have a guitar but I’m not sure what I do is really “playing” it. My favorite thing is spending time with my friends and loved ones over a meal.

Q) If you weren’t a postal worker, what would you be doing instead?

- A) That’s a tough one. I’m coming up on eight years with the post office and my time before that feels like another lifetime. I guess I would be working in the oilfield, or some work attached to my tradesman’s journeyman ticket in painting and decorating. I’m glad to be where I am.

Q) Three things you can’t live without

- A) I’m pretty in tune with technology and the connections it allows me to maintain with friends and family who are distant, so I guess my first one would be a computer. I frequently use my camera as an excuse to explore nature and disconnect when I have the time. Public transit isn’t very good in my hometown of Edmonton so my last one would be my little car that I use to get out to the mountains and travel.

Pacific

Name: **Ellen Bowles**

Local: **Salmon Arm/
Revelstoke 823**

Years working
at Canada Post: **8**



Q) What made you decide to get involved in this campaign?

- A) Bringing awareness to our members and strengthening our work floors is a passion of mine. When this campaign was first introduced, I wanted to be involved because it gives me hope for the future of CUPW and our membership. It's crucial that we mobilize the members around key issues we are facing today to create a strong foundation so that we can withstand the tactics the employer uses to divide us. This campaign offers a strategic plan to start building connections, recruiting organizers, and training our members in work floor organizing. I strongly believe that with this approach, we as a Union have the capacity to organize and stand up against the employer and government.

Q) How did you first become involved in organizing in your workplace?

- A) When I was hired in 2014, there was a freeze on filling positions in the Pacific region. I chose to transfer to Grande Prairie, Alberta in order to become a full-time worker. As a brand-new letter carrier, I was unaware of what forced backs were and the impacts it had on workers. I realized that the members were completely exhausted and overburdened, and I wanted to help. The local executive was also burnt out. When I said I wanted to get involved, they supported me unconditionally.

Thanks to my Union, I became educated, which provided me the tools to start building connections with the workers. I got a better understanding on how to mobilize around the issues the local was facing and started talking to people. I provided support and the opportunity for members to express frustrations and concerns about their working conditions. These conversations started bringing people together. I worked hard to improve our contact lists throughout the Local, I brought new ideas and energy into the workplace around

organizing and help to revitalize the membership. Participation at the local general membership meetings increased and members were willing to become more involved. Over time the strength and solidarity of the local increased.

Q) Who or what inspires you to do this work?

- A) The membership inspires me to do this work. When workers come together around an issue in their workplace and develop a plan to push back against the employer and win, that motivates me to continue to the important work of the union.

Q) What advice can you give to workers who want to get involved in organizing and building collective power on the work floor and in the Union?

- A) There is a place for everyone, and we all have something to offer. The union's education programs are phenomenal and there is a lot of variety that tailors to anyone that wants to get involved. If you're interested, get connected with your shop stewards and Local executive. Ask when the next general membership meeting that the local is holding and show up.

Q) What is the most pressing issue facing postal workers today?

- A) There are several pressing issues, the key ones being: new technology and the threat of replacement of workers and loss of jobs through the introduction of automation, Amazon, contracting out of our work, privatization, back to work legislation, the two-tier wage system, adequate wages, lack of staff, the length of routes, increased work hours, overburdening, and maintaining a work life balance.

Q) When you're not working or building up the labour movement, what do you do for fun?

- A) I like to take my dog on adventures and explore new places. I also like to play pinball.

Q) If you weren't a postal worker, what would you be doing instead?

- A) I love being an advocate for change by bringing people together to push for a more harmonious society. If I wasn't loving my job as a postal worker, I would be working in some form of social advocacy or community outreach.

Q) Three things you can't live without

- A) Trees, water and laughter.

International Solidarity Matters to Us All

By definition, a labor union is an organized association of workers, often in a trade or profession, formed to protect and further their rights and interests.

Solidarity, by definition, is the unity that produces or is based on unities of interests, objectives, and standards. It refers to the ties that bind workers together as one, no matter where they work or live.

Unions around the world are fighting for many of the same rights: safe working conditions, quality of life off the job, and of course, fair and just wages. Workers are more likely to gain rights and win when the labour movement sticks together, which is why solidarity is a foundation of the labour movement.

“The most important word in the language of the working class is solidarity,” said Harry Bridges, who founded, and led for 40 years the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in New York. This solidarity can’t be limited to one workplace, city, or country; to be successful, it must be applied everywhere, locally, nationally, and internationally.

CUPW and the World

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers has always been committed to international solidarity. We even brought this issue to the bargaining table. The International Postal Fund, under Appendix “R” of the collective agreement, was negotiated in 2000. This fund, paid for by Canada Post, helps the Union stay involved in and support the international labour movement, finances solidarity projects with postal unions around the world, and much more, without the use of union dues.

Through the International Postal Fund, CUPW has supported postal workers and their unions in Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, French Africa, Palestine, and Venezuela. These projects range from, but are not limited to, training sessions, helping workers organize, and helping postal unions participate in the broader labour movement.

Solidarity at Home

The Union is also committed to international solidarity here in Canada through concrete actions in conjunction with labour and civil society organizations, such as Common Frontiers and International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group and the CLC International committee. Over the years, we’ve provided meeting space, logistics support, and participated actively in meetings, working groups, and conferences in support of worker issues.

Workers Helping Workers

Strong and organized unions aren’t built overnight; they require investments. To strengthen the labour movement worldwide, countries with resources and expertise must help others build sustainable union structures. Many countries are starting from scratch; union structures are non-existent. International solidary projects help countries create their unions and build a system and structure. To be truly independent, unions should be funded through the dues collected from their members. Once a strong foundation is laid, these new unions can begin to operate on their own.

The goal of CUPW’s international solidarity work, through projects and delegations, is to build and maintain strong relationships with other postal unions around the world, and to preserve strong unionized public post offices both at home and internationally.

Workers of the World Unite!



Don Forman
National Union Representative
Under direction of NEC





CUPW EQUITY AUDIT

Bold and important initiative launched in 2022

Over the last several years, there has been a lot of talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. While talking about an issue is a good first step, talk is meaningless without concrete plans and actions.

In 2017, the CUPW National Executive Board adopted a resolution from the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) which recommended that an equity audit of the elected leadership of CUPW be completed at the local, regional, and national levels.

In 2022, the CUPW National Human Rights Committee, led by National President Jan Simpson, 2nd Vice-President Dave Bleakney, and Secretary-Treasurer Bev Collins pushed forward this recommendation to ensure the equity audit would be well underway or completed by the next CUPW Convention in May 2023.

CUPW hired two retired union activists, and labour educators to assist the NHRC to implement the proposal, which was inspired by Trades Union Congress (TUC) in the UK. The TUC initiative includes both an audit of equity group representation as well as a broader

exploration of the work carried out by unions, with a human rights perspective, to obtain a comprehensive analysis of the union's human rights work.

Given the scope of the work, and to ensure its success, it was determined that the audit would be done in two steps.

The first step involved the collection of data on representation at the National, Regional, and Local levels, in elected and committee positions, through a CUPW self-identification questionnaire. The results will provide a snapshot of the current leadership and help develop initiatives and recommendations to address representational disparities. To achieve our equity goals, we must be guided by CUPW's principles of diversity and inclusion and create a welcoming environment that invites and encourages equity seeking members to fully participate in elected positions and committees.

The second step requires a more holistic approach with an analysis of CUPW's structures, work, and services through an equity lens to advance human rights issues.

At the time of publication, CUPW has concluded the first step by conducting the voluntary, self-identification survey. The survey was promoted during national and regional

RECOMMENDATION # 26:

It is **MOVED**, **SECONDED** and **CARRIED** to adopt the NHRC Recommendation # 26.

NHRC **RECOMMENDS** that an equity audit of the elected leadership of CUPW be completed and done at the local, regional, and national levels.

BE IT RESOLVED that an equity audit be done throughout CUPW at the local, regional, and national levels of the staff.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it shall be done by December 2017.

meetings including the National President's meeting and the NEC-REC and sent to all CUPW leadership to maximize engagement and participation from the membership.

A preliminary analysis of the results of the survey was done early last fall and consultations with elected leaders working with the NHRC have begun on the trends emerging from this first step.

Information is power, and once we have the results of the equity audit, CUPW will have identified ways of ensuring the increase of equity group member participation and representation of equity group members at all levels in our union. This is a crucial step to support our work in advancing and promoting human rights in our union and in our members' workplace. We hope that member participation will help grow our capacity to mobilize around human rights issues.

The equity audit serves as ground-breaking work for CUPW and could set an example for the rest of the labour movement. What is needed now is a strong commitment by the National Executive Board, Union Representatives, Committees, Local Presidents, and Secretary-Treasurers to further the work, as set out in recommendation #26.

EQUITY VS EQUALITY: *WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?*

Equity recognizes each person has **different circumstances and needs**, meaning different groups of people need different resources and opportunities allocated to them to thrive.

Equality, on the other hand, is giving **everyone the exact same resources across the board**, regardless of individual or groups of people's actual needs or opportunities/resources already provided to them.





Let's Talk About Sex...

and pregnancy, and abortion, and health, and...

Conversations about sex can be sensitive and awkward. For a variety of reasons, whether it be our upbringing, religion, lack of education, stigma etc. many of us don't feel comfortable talking about sex even if silence could mean risking our health. If we aren't talking about sex, we aren't talking about our sexual health, and if we aren't talking about sexual health, then we are missing out on important information.

The term *sexual health* covers a range of different topics, from sexually transmitted infections (STI), to contraception and family planning, to abortion, and to intimacy and relationships.

When we do decide to have these conversations, resources are often limited. The country is facing a health care crisis; many people don't have family physicians and walk-in clinics are overwhelmed. People must find other ways to access safe, easy, and confidential information about their sexual health.



Access Line Overview

The Access Line provides sexual health information and connects people to the services they need, including abortion services.

The Access Line team is made up of staff members and trained volunteer members who provide compassionate and non-judgmental support.

The line can be reached 7 days a week by calling 1-888-642-2725 during the hours of 9:00AM and 9:00PM ET. After hours, voicemails can be left and will be returned the following day.

Prefer texting? Text 613-800-6757

Texts will be answered between 9:00AM and 9:00PM ET

You can also send an email at access@actioncanadashr.org

One of these ways is through the Access Line – a 7-day a week, toll-free, confidential phone and text line run by Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights. Anyone can call the Access Line to ask questions and receive information about sexual health, pregnancy, abortion, and safer sex. Action Canada can also provide referrals to clinics and hospitals that provide reproductive health services including abortion, anywhere in Canada.

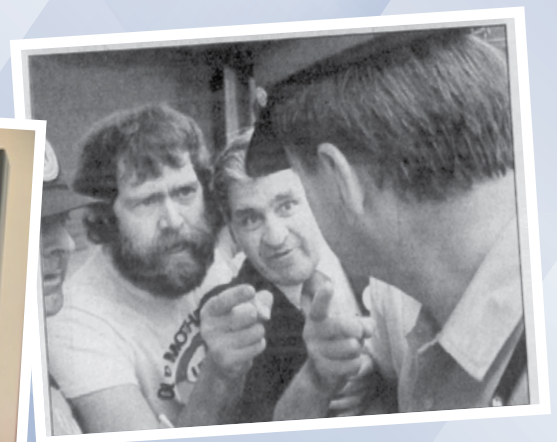
Action Canada is a progressive, pro-choice charitable organization committed to advancing and upholding sexual and reproductive health and rights in Canada and globally. It has seen a steady increase in the number of calls to the Access Line over the last year, and demand regularly outstrips its capacity. The number of calls increased by 264 percent between 2021 and 2022. Half of all callers need information or access to abortion, while the other 50 percent need general sexual health information, including how to avoid transmission of STIs, safer sex, where to get tested, available treatments, and how to disclose to partners or navigate stigma especially around HIV and HSV.

In April 2022, Action Canada received two-years of funding from the federal government's new Sexual and Reproductive Health Fund, which allowed them to hire a full-time staff member to work on the Access Line. Prior to this, calls were answered by two staff members in addition to their full-time duties.

The Bickerton Room



On September 22, 2022, the Geoff Bickerton Room was officially unveiled at the CUPW National Office. Brother Bickerton started working at CUPW in January 1977. He dedicated his life and career to CUPW and postal workers. In 2022, after 45 years of service, Geoff retired. The collaborative workspace at National Office which bears his name recognizes Brother Bickerton's unwavering support to CUPW and all workers.



PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40064660
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO
CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS
377 BANK STREET OTTAWA ON K2P 1Y3

