



*Summer/ Fall 2023 Edition*



**Canadian Union of Postal Workers-  
Winnipeg Local 856**

# **EYEOPENER**



***September 30 marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation***



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***Today, we recognize we are all on Treaty One Territory and would like to further recognize this is the ancestral grounds of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples and homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the treaties that were made on these territories. We acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.***

# The president.



Life as a new President, I was elected on September 9, 2023, and it's been a wild ride ever since! Ill give you my experiences so far, my first two days I worked closely with Past President Matthew, Matthew was super organized and had a list ready to go. We had the credit union signing over computer programs and nuance of the portfolio. From Wednesday on It's been floor visits, new hire talks, setting up consultations, and an amount of email that would make most quake in their boots!

I made a commitment to visit every work floor every month and have conversations and directions from the members. To this point (September 22, 2023, at 17:34hrs) I have visited 4/5 letter carrier depots on 2 waves, 3 retail offices and 2/3 shifts at the WMPP, with 1 depot and 1 shift that I hope to hit Sunday night and Monday morning. Ill tell you what, I've had the most amazing experience taking to as many people as possible. I've met so many strong members and I've been inspired repeatedly. I was hoping to get some ideas and suggestions on how to make the local stronger, and not only did I do that, but I found that fire of unionism burning in so many. I want the membership to trust the union, and in my life the only way to get trust was to earn it, and you earn it by keeping promises. I've promised to be on every floor and that's almost delivered, I've promised to bring back those suggestions and try and find solutions, and in most cases in the depots, they have been resolved before leaving the building, The outstanding ones I'm bring to the whole executive, so we can all work together to find those solutions.

I'm so lucky, I'm so lucky to have the executive that we do, we have people that go above and beyond every day, they put in countless hours above their 40-hour work week to represent our membership. Most of the work done is done with no fanfare or acclaim, but doing what is right. That helps me dig a little deeper, when I see how hard they work I feel I must dig in a little deeper to catch up. I'd also like to thank our shop stewards. It's a difficult job, and that collective agreement is not a "easy read", but they have familiarized themselves with it to make sure our members rights are protected.

I'm proud to say looking at our committees are filled with rank and file who signed up to motivate, educate, support, and empower. Your contributions go so far beyond words, and they support our members and their interests. We literally have something for everyone, from woman's committee to route measurement to good and welfare, we have you covered.

Where do we go from here? My plan is to continue to build bridges, to build trust and relationships on the floor. I'd like to start setting social activities every couple of months, from Karaoke to a bowling night and any other suggestions you may have. The reason for this is, when we break bread with each other, group 1, group 2 group 3 and RSMC, we learn about the people behind the "numbers". We learn we are all part of something bigger. When we break bread we build relationships, and foster understanding. When we build our circles, we start acting like a whole. Imagine instead of having a section or a depot or a wave of voices we had a group of 1600 voices shouting in unison "SOL!! SOL!! SOL!!". I've heard it before at rallies with groups of unions, but after seeing and meeting so many of you I know we can not only replicate it but make it louder. By being a unified group, we are stronger, strength is what makes us a union.

*"The Labour movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress"* – **Martin Luther King**

Sean Tugby

## Fall Report – Health and Safety Officer

The road called 'life' we're on has gotten bumpy over the summer and due to medical reasons, I had to step away from my desk for a while. It gave me a chance to experience the stress and hardship of not having a short-term disability file supported. Yes, even I, the Health and Safety Officer am not immune to the frustrations of a non-supported disability claim. It solidified the importance of having ALL relevant information supplied to CanadaLife. A simple doctor's note will not suffice, regardless of the diagnosis. I'm supported now, but I think it's important to touch on this again for both new and old members.

If you are navigating through CanadaLife (STDP), they look for the following information to satisfy the claim:

- Complete list of symptoms and associated severity consistent with the diagnosis
- Details of a treatment plan
- Copies of any relevant test results or investigative reports
- Copies of any clinical chart notes relevant to the claim
- Prognosis for recovery
- Restrictions and limitations
- Any MRI's, Xray's, or physiotherapy treatment plans
- Any psychological, psychiatrist reports Any specialist reports relevant to the claim

Whether it's illness or injury (outside of the workplace), the above documents are crucial to your claim.

There is a new president in town, Sean Tugby. Congratulations! Sean was the first to nominate me into the local as chief steward for RSMC's years back. He mentored me through grievances, first levels, and the ins and outs of being an advocate for members. Sean has a lot of tools in the ol' CUPW handbag and he really helped set me up to be successful. I look forward to collaborating with Sean over the next six months, sharing his ideas and his vision for a unified membership as we head into collective bargaining.

On that note, there is a huge thank you to Matthew Aitken, our former president. Matthew and I started in the local office around the same time. His energy and enthusiasm for activism, and support for me meant a lot. It made me want to do better, represent better, and become more involved as a union activist. We usually started our days, either me sitting in his office, or Matthew sitting in mine discussing our current situations and the attack plan for the day. He was always ready to fire off an email or attend that emergency meeting for members and go nose to nose with the employer. That grit and enthusiasm doesn't come along too often, so with him stepping down...he will be missed.

I've missed a lot over the summer, and there is a lot of catching up to do. (before I need to step away again for surgery) Thank you to Christina McVety for filling the role in my absence. Coming from a part time gig at the region dealing with STDP appeals gave me confidence that her mind was already in the game, and would be able to look after you if and when issues arise. This is a tough position, with no formal training, we learn on the fly as situations arise. That's generally the way it is with every position from steward to president...but we are here to help. That's where our hearts are, and that's why I appreciate every one of you who steps up...so thank you again. Solidarity!

Be safe and be well,

Reggie Taman





## **Vice president**

I was off work for a medical reason for a few months and just got back to work, which is why the newsletter wasn't printed for the summer season. The local was pretty busy covering for other officers that were off work for health reasons and holidays.

So what has been going on!

If I go way back to the month of May and tell you about the convention I had a chance to attend and the experience I had, you would be reading this article for days so let me just say that I am glad I had the opportunity to attend the convention and to gain the experience and knowledge that I did. I am grateful for that.

In fact I am grateful for a lot of things in life. Health is one of the things that I am grateful for. When we are healthy and don't have to visit doctors often, we don't think about how important and valuable our health is, we don't realize it's the most important thing to have. A lot of times we take our health for granted, but let me tell you that from my experience, we should never take our health for granted. We should always take care of ourselves before anything. We can be useful to others when we are healthy and happy. When our physical health is threatened our mental health is also affected. So please don't take your health for granted and take care of yourself.

Going back to the local. We have a new president! A lot of you know and a lot of you attended the GMM and elected Sean Tugby to be our president and I look forward to working with him.

Contract demand is upon us. As you may recall in June, we had a regional conference in Edmonton where we took resolutions from our local members to vote on. We passed as many resolutions as we could. Now, we are to hold a ratification vote on November 1st (RSMC) and 5th for the urban.

### **What is a contract ratification vote?**

The contract ratification vote is when the members of the union democratically determine whether or not to accept the terms of the agreement that has been tentatively agreed to by the corporation and the union's elected bargaining committee. A simple majority of those voting determines the outcome of the vote. So come out and vote on what matters to you the most.

### **September 30th**

September 30th marks truth and reconciliation day, however it shouldn't be the only day that we reflect on the history of the indigenous people in Canada. On this day, I encourage you to remember those who were taken away from their families against their will and those who have lost loved ones. Try and put yourself in their place and think how it might feel. I find myself thinking about indigenous people often and think how I would have felt if anyone had taken my kids away from me. Its an imaginable!



## Appendix HH training.

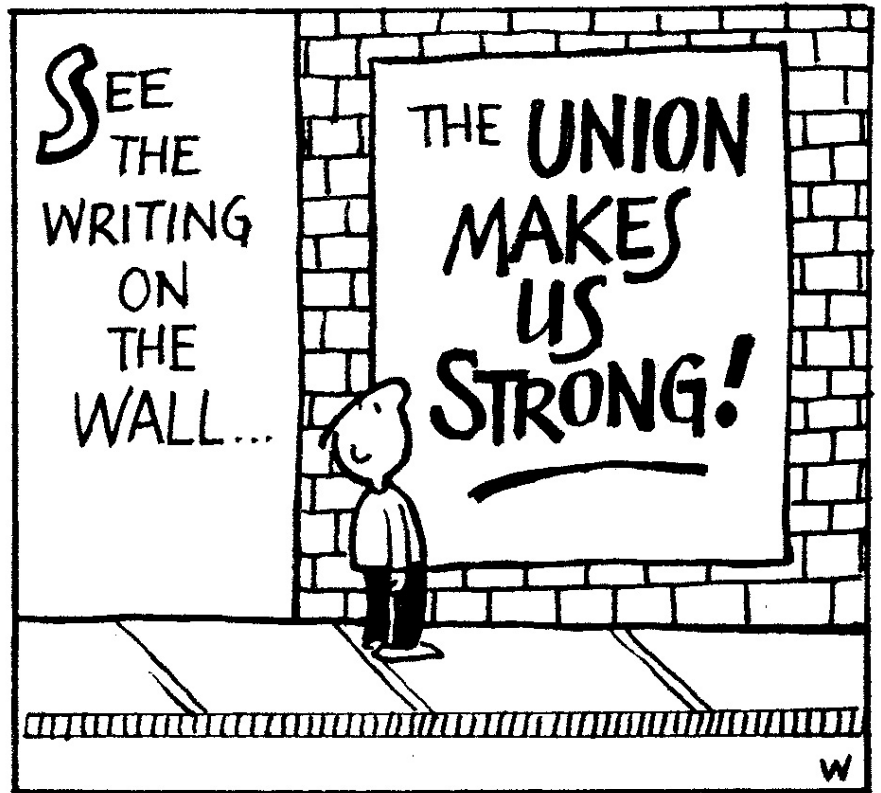
Two weeks ago, I attended an appendix HH training to learn to facilitate our new members about their rights and responsibilities. It's mainly about human rights and work place conflict resolution. I can tell you that not only did I learn about my rights and responsibilities but I am ready to educate others about it. It was wonderful.

Knowing your rights and the rights of others help us all work together without fear and conflict which makes it easier for everyone to enjoy their jobs.

The other thing I have been observing since I became the vice president of our local, is a lack of communication. The members need to communicate with each other, with their union representatives and their employers. Vice versa. Clear communication is a key to solving any problems that arise.

Call your local union representatives if you have any questions or concerns about anything related to your work at Canada Post.

Attend your union meetings to stay informed and updated about what the union does and is doing for you. Find a way to get involved with your local union to help build a better workplace environment. You have paid your five dollars for membership so you have every right to come to meetings and state your ideas and opinions. You don't have to have problems to need the union.



### RSMC

The employer has notified CUPW of their intent to terminate the two wave memorandum of agreement signed last year for RSMC's in South West. This means no Deerfoot. I personally like this because I 100% agree to never share cases and have no start time. Some of you may feel differently.

If you have any question you know how to reach me.

In solidarity,  
Vice president  
Mahdia Hasan



## **Health and Safety report**

Stepping into Reggie's role as Acting Health and Safety Officer is a difficult task. I recognize, welcome the curiosity and questions regarding why I was approached to watch Reggie's chair. I knew it wouldn't be easy, but I wasn't prepared for personal attacks.

I'd like to introduce myself, answer some questions and wrap up with a warm and fuzzy message.

My name is Christina McVety, I'm a temporary worker at WMPP since 2020. I'm a Creative Communications Graduate, volunteered for years at Women's Health Clinic as an Unplanned Pregnancy and Birth Control Counselor, wrote/voiced radio ads for a decade and I'm an elected alternate union representative for Prairie Region.

In the Summer of 2022, I applied for a position at the Regional Office, writing Short Term Disability Final Appeals. When STDP is denied, members can appeal and CanadaLife conducts an internal review. If it's denied again, members face claw back payments – and yes, that's the official term as violent and cruel as it sounds – but the member has one last shot, the final appeal, to be written by a Union Representative or Worker's Advocate.

Writing an appeal involves navigating thick paper files containing all correspondence, doctor's notes, chart notes, personal statements, etc. It's detective work, finding a missed document that could potentially change everything or requesting further information and statements from members. It's not fast work, even when things are running smoothly.

COVID-19 created a massive backlog. Members left waiting for months, even years, for completed appeals. Union Reps and alternates couldn't keep up with the influx because each file demands significant attention – and remember, every file is a life on hold.

The work is hard – you're dealing with frustrated, traumatized members. Mental health claims are a majority of STDP denials – which is a reflection on how CPC really "keeps wellness in mind." You know that slogan that's plastered everywhere? Yeah, it seems disingenuous when members are actively trying to get help and are denied. It becomes increasingly difficult to keep wellness in mind when members feel unheard, debts mount and they slip further into uncertainty.

I worked at the region for 6 months working only on STDP Final Appeals. I've worked hard over the years to manage my OCD, which I was diagnosed with when I was 10, and anxiety. I knew I would be dealing with difficult situations so I proactively saw my psychiatrist.

I have never felt more in control of my anxiety when I'm writing in the defense of other people's panic attacks. I worked hard and wrote many successful appeals. Members received re-payment, felt heard and most importantly, believed but I can't show you my work because it's confidential.

Reggie helped me out a lot while writing final appeals and he asked me to cover his chair because he saw my work.

The vitriol online knocked me back and my mental health was greatly affected. Even with a strong support system, it was incredibly defeating. I became depressed. Fun fact: as a temporary employee, I don't qualify for STDP.

The world is in a tough place right now. We're all struggling and it's not going to get easier. Automation is on the horizon, SSD is implemented in some depots. Often our anger gets misdirected. Part-timers angry at temps, temps angry at the Local, Group 1's issues aren't Group 2's, etc.

The baggage people carry is often unseen, there's no way to know everyone's struggles but it is certain,



everyone has a story that could break your heart.

Please keep this in mind if you notice someone getting switched out of rotation. Don't automatically assume it's special treatment, it could be medically supported accommodation. That co-worker who just snapped at you for apparently no reason, would you take it personally if you knew about their sleepless night caring for their sick child?

A small thing, like telling someone you appreciate their help can make all the difference. Check in with a co-worker who seems down, make that phone call you've put off, show support at rallies.

You don't have to be best friends with everyone, you certainly don't have to like everyone but by simply recognizing people may be fighting unseen battles, it may help avoid taking small slights personally, creating a more fulfilling workday. At the end of the day, we're here to work and go home







## Oh oh, I got a 24!

I receive a lot of calls from members who have just received 24 and want to know what to do next.

1. The first thing you need to do when your supervisor hands you a 24 is put in a request to see a shop steward.

2. The second thing you need to do is put in a written request to view your personal file.

Your shop steward will attend the interview with you and take notes of the discussion. Shop stewards are there to provide guidance to members, defend our contract rights, assist in filing grievances, and advocate for you when your rights have been violated. They are the first line of defense against the boss, and work closely with the Local Office to protect our workplace rights.

### Article 10.04 Interviews, and your Substantive Rights

When it comes to the discipline process members have several substantive rights. Some of the most important ones are listed in article 10.04 of both Collective Agreements where the rules pertaining to interviews are found. They are:

- to be notified twenty-four (24) hours in advance of any interview;
- the right to be accompanied by a Union representative;
- the right to know the purpose of the meeting, including whether it involves your personal file;
- to view your file in accordance with clause 10.03;
- the right to refuse to participate or to continue to participate in such interview unless you have received proper notice.

10.04 also states that if you fail to appear at the interview and do not explain your inability to do so, the Corporation shall proceed unilaterally. In other words, that if you are choosing not to proceed based on one of the previous rights you must explain beforehand why you are not proceeding.

If any of the conditions listed above are not met, you should not proceed with the interview. Arbitrators do not look favourably at the employer when they violate our substantive rights.

If you receive less than 24-hours' notice for an interview, or if the notice is too vague, then you (with your Shop Steward) should refuse to participate in the interview and ask that a the 24 be reissued with more details.

If you proceed with the interview anyway, you are waiving your rights under Article 10.04 and you are unable to use the lack of information to have the discipline thrown out by an arbitrator. The Corporation will threaten to proceed unilaterally and may even do so, but if they impose discipline, the discipline can be successfully fought at arbitration.



### Viewing Your Personal File

To request your file all you have to do is write on a piece of paper “I am requesting to view my complete personal file”, then sign it and date it and give it to your supervisor. This should be done in writing.

Viewing your personal file prior to an interview is a substantive right under 10.04 (b). If your file is not

there before the interview, you have the right to refuse to participate in the interview and we would strongly advise you that you should not proceed.

When you view your file if there is anything older than 12 months, the Corporation must remove it from your file as per 10.02 (c).

*10.02 (c) Any unfavourable report concerning an employee and any report concerning an infraction shall be withdrawn from the file after a period of twelve (12) months from the date of the alleged infraction.*

If the employer does not remove the expired letters immediately, then you should file a grievance. For corrective action ask that you be awarded financial compensation as punitive damages to the employer because the last sentence of 10.03 states that letters described in paragraph 10.02(c), that is letters over 12 months old are to be removed **prior** to viewing your file.

*10.03 "...Where an employee's file is available for review and/or examination, reports as described in paragraph 10.02(c) are to be removed prior to such review and/or examination."*

### **What to Expect After the Interview**

Following the interview, the employer will usually issue a report in the form of a letter with their findings and outcome from the interview. Often these letters will impose discipline such as a suspension.

Our contracts say any report must be placed in the personal file within 10 days of any alleged infraction. For Urban Operations, the time limit is 10 calendar days. For RSMCs, it is 10 working days (meaning weekends don't count). If you receive your letter later than 10 days be sure to note that on the grievance investigation form when you grieve it because it would be in violation of 10.02 (b).

Any time you receive a letter from the corporation that states "a copy of this letter will be placed on your personal file" you should immediately request a shop steward. Do not assume the letter means nothing. **All letters must be grieved!**

### **Be Wary of Waived Suspensions!**

Do not assume a waived suspension means nothing. A waived suspension holds as much weight as a served suspension, it just doesn't have the financial penalty. It is just as important to grieve a waived suspension as a regular suspension as they may be relied on by the Employer at a later date to justify further discipline up unto including discharge.

In fact, it is important to **file a grievance for all letters placed onto your file** even if they sound non disciplinary. This includes letters of expectation, letters of instruction, temporary worker availability letters, and frequently injured employee letters.

If you do not grieve a letter, it means you agree with its content and the letter may be relied on by management at a later date.

Lastly don't leave it to the last minute to file your grievance! The Union has 25 working days (following the date you first became aware of the situation) to submit a grievance on your behalf, but your grievance should be submitted to the office as soon as possible and in within 14 days to allow us time for processing.



**When grieving discipline, members are responsible to supply the Local with:**

- The 24 hour notice of interview.
- The notes your shop steward took at the interview.
- Any letter(s) of discipline from the Corporation.
- Any suspension notice issued by the employer.

SAP prints of the week(s) your suspension was served showing how you were coded

If you have questions about your workplace rights and/or wish to file a grievance speak with your shop steward or call me at the office. Remember you have the right to have a Shop Steward present for all interactions with management – both formal and informal. If you receive a 24 request to see a shop steward as soon as possible.

In solidarity,

**Cherylynn Saramaga-Martai**

Grievance Officer



## Secretary-Treasurer

Good bye Summer! Hello Autumn!

Hot long summer days are gone. Undeniably, autumn is here. Before its arrival, I was able to sneak in visits to four affiliated facilities – Steinbach, Selkirk, Stonewall and Beausejour. I am truly grateful to Patrick, Mahdia and Cheryllynn for letting me tag along, as I am directionally challenged and definitely confidence lacking behind the wheel.

Like when we were in school, day trips are usually fun, but also have their purposes. Aside from getting to see and experience different characteristics of each small town/city through my interactions with the members, my main goal was to sign up as many Rand members as possible, and have their status change from Rand to members in good standing (MIGS). From an employee's perspective, why would you not want to benefit from everything that the union has to offer, things such as free life insurance for you and your family, dues waivers when you go on certain leaves, access to free union education, being able to run for office, the right to vote to accept or reject the proposed collective agreement during negotiation, etc.?

During the last RSMC Conference, based on a certain percentage of the total number of RSMCs who were MIGS, Winnipeg Local 856 was able to send only three (3) RSMC delegates to represent and vote on resolutions that could possibly affect their interests and working conditions. I was very disappointed, and disheartened. I decided to make it my mission to get as many RSMCs signed up for membership as possible. I am hoping that by the time the next RSMC Conference takes place, our local will be able to send the maximum number of RSMCs possible to the conference.

As for Urban members, our Local could have sent twenty-five (25) delegates, but only 17 went, eight of whom were executive members. Perhaps it was due to extended travel restrictions and fear of catching the virus; perhaps, family reunions suddenly became of utmost importance because so many people have lost their loved ones during the pandemics. Whatever the reasons were, I certainly hope that was the last time our Local was not able to fill all available delegate spots at a regional conference. There were so many resolutions that were presented and combed through, first by the Regional Conference Committee, and then by all delegates. If there was an issue about which you were passionate or detested, and our local did not have it as one of ours, you would most likely find it at either the conference, brought forth by one of the other locals. There, you could certainly speak freely whether you were for or against any resolution, and give the reason for your stand.

For me personally, being a part of the Regional Conference and then the National Convention was a very rewarding experience. I got to meet, connect and reconnect with members from across the country. I learnt how to affect policy changes, social changes, and sadly, how much time (most of the time, years) and effort are required before changes are adopted and implemented, ie. if they even get to see the light of day.

One thing that I would really like to convey to all of you is that regardless of how some may feel about the National Executive Board and their team in Ottawa, or the Regional National Director and her team, many of them work very long hours with insanely disruptive travel times and frequency, in addition to the unimaginable stress that occupy their minds and are a part of their jobs. We don't have to share or understand their views, but we certainly should appreciate their effort and the demands their jobs entail. These folks put themselves out there to do the jobs to which many of us would rather say "no, thank you" or use even more colourful language in declining.



Until next time, I wish all of you good health and peace this transitional season.  
Happy Autumn!

Ha Yen Jiwa  
Secretary-Treasurer

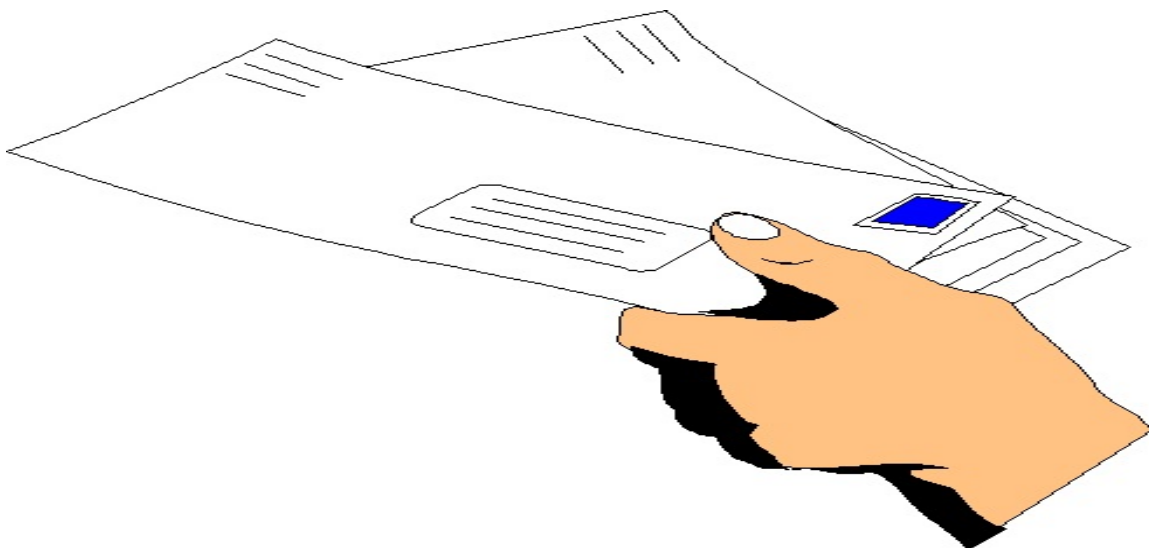


**"Will you stop 'tutting' until I've finished my report."**

\*RSMC – Rural and Suburban Mail Carrier

\*\*Rand is the name of the judge who made the landmark decision obligating employees to pay union dues even though they do not sign up for membership. Justice Rand's reasoning was based on the fact that these employees benefit from the collective agreement, and therefore are required to pay union dues.

\*\*\*MIGS - member in good standing



# RSMC Lead steward report

September 7, 2023

Good afternoon,

On July 13 an RSMC steward meeting was held at the Local. We discussed a variety of issues relating to the ongoing Northeast Depot restructure, pay issues, changes in work practices (case sharing, A-62 cases, start times etc) changes in equipment, missing time values from RSMC's Appendix A and the impending new safe drop procedure.

We also discussed dynamic routing and the RSMC hourly rate committee. Why this matters, currently RSMCs report their PCIs to the employer weekly, this could change in the future where the employer has all the data on a parcel and is able to properly interpret/recognize what ends up being a PCI or not for an RSMC.

On July 26 I visited Morden and Winkler depot to field concerns relating to the recent restructure of both depots. Cases were changed from A-32 to A-62, some cases became flip cases which the union still hasn't worked out a time value for nationally for RSMCs. Happily, no RSMC ended up with a shared case and everyone still had a mail ready time, as opposed to a start time. Unhappily, since the restructure the highway service 3<sup>rd</sup> party hired by Canada Post has been an hour late over 30% of the time.

In tandem with the restructure, procedures that began during the pandemic were removed. No longer were two depot carts to be used to sort parcels, it was back to one depot cart per route and an IDC for overflow.

In the spirit of Trish Masniuk, in that all members of the union should have access to their benefits log into your Employee Self-Serve (ESS) and click on benefits. Click on Benefits Changes Tables (NEW) and here you have instructions on how to add/remove your spouse/partner, children, dependents, from your benefits. Each is a multi-step process and clicking on the first step opens a page with a plethora of forms. Match up the name of the form on the table with the name on the list, fill out the form and send it off. The address will be on the bottom of the form, you can submit it by email, by fax or by mail. The local has a scanner and a fax should you require it. Alternatively, you can take this guide and ask for help from your supervisor and do it in depot.

We bargained for our benefits, we fought for them, and the last step is to jump through a few paperwork hoops. The cost of switching from single to family benefits for 2 of our plans is less than a pint at a brewery, and for the remaining one it's free, so switch over today if this applies to you.

Solidarity,

Patrick Clare



## INTERNAL CHIEF SHOP SWEWARD

### C.S.I Report

Hey 856, hope you are all enjoying the warm weather! Believe me, you've all earned it... The local might seem like there haven't been officers around for the past month and a half, but believe me, we have all been very-very busy...

At the Regional Conference in November 2022, I was elected to the National Human Rights Committee as a member of the Indigenous Working Group. As a result of that election, I was able to attend the National Human Rights Conference which took place April 13-15 in Montreal. The conference consisted mainly of workshops and guest speakers highlighting and addressing the struggles that exist with the various equity seeking groups and how to break barriers in the work place. Sounds like a lot, and believe me my head was spinning by the time we wrapped up on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Shout-out to Sister Cheryllynn Saramaga-Martai, Sister Mahdia Hasan, Brother Archie Dimano and Brother Dave Lambert as the other Winnipeg Local delegates representing the 856 at the conference.

After returning from Montreal, I had a brief amount of time to unpack, present some first levels to the employer, maybe take in some shifts on the plant floor and then repack, and get on another airplane to go to the CUPW National Convention in Toronto (May 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>).

Convention, as you all are aware, is where you get to understand the true power of our union- *Democracy*. With every membership meeting, committee meeting, exec meeting or regional conference it is the process by which every motion, order of business or resolution is passed. To participate as a delegate to convention, first you MUST be a delegate to the regional pre-convention conference- to get there you have to qualify as a delegate at a special local GMM. At that meeting, you would have had to attended at least 50% or more of the last years GMMs. Sounds like a lot to commit to but believe me, the only way you can commit to becoming a national delegate is to give a couple of hours a month to take in a GMM.

The National Convention is where all the decisions to change how the union is operated and what changes to our constitution are to be made. Kind of like a GMM on steroids!!! But seriously though a lot of resolutions are debated, voted on and passed over the course of the first four days of convention.

On the last day, the convention floor becomes the election floor as The National Executive Committee and the rest of the National officers are "elected". I put that in quotations to let you know that many positions are acclaimed as not many delegates want to move to Ottawa. After national elections, the delegates split off to their regional caucuses to elect their respective regional executive committee's and regional union representatives. By the end of the day everyone is drained having sat in debates, presentations, or guest speakers over the past 120 hours.

Upon returning (again) to Winnipeg, I was able to attend exec, another GMM and then continue the same process of presenting 1<sup>st</sup> levels, attend LJHSC prep and meeting and then try and get another shift (or two) on the plant floor.

(Still with me?)

**GRRREAT!**

After covering the office on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of May, I went to the airport (yup once again) to head out to Edmonton for the Regional Pre-Negotiation Conference (June 1-3)

After having attended convention just over a month before, regional delegates weren't as talkative as it seemed and a record number of resolutions were passed to be sent to Ottawa.

Those resolutions, as you know, get piled up on the Negotiation Committee (not yet formed so don't ask!)

-who will then get it passed by the NEB for the membership (that would be you) to pass later this year.

So NO! I do not have any knowledge of negotiations (they haven't started yet) and also, I do NOT have any inside knowledge of any shift bid that is coming up.

The employer does not want to do a shift bid mid-year and they have not consulted with the local about adding any new positions.

(Although really, with everything that has gone on over the past three months there hasn't really been time for any consultations!)

Over the next couple of weeks, I will be driving the new walks at NE depot as they are undergoing an SSD restructure (long story!) It is my intention to (hopefully) have a shop steward meeting sometime in July.

Solidarity and enjoy your summer

Cameron Fortier

CSI Winnipeg Local 856



*CUPW respectfully acknowledges that this office is on Treaty 1 territory and is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene and Lakota Peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation.*



## EXTERNAL CHIEF SHOP STEWARD

Greetings and salutations my fellow 856ers.

Autumn has snuck up on us after a whirlwind summer. Over the last few months instances of discipline have been rising and falling in waves. The corporation's focus for the aforementioned discipline has once again changed. SSD has come to Winnipeg, namely our Northeast Depot, and is coming for your Depot soon enough.

As I'm sure you've all read in my monthly reports, over the past few months, the sheer volume of 24s has remained ridiculously high, with members being dragged in for every conceivable reason, from walking too fast, to allegations of inappropriate driving with no corroborative evidence, to daring to ask a known bully supervisor to leave them alone, to PDTs not picking up their daily vehicle scans. And far too often, the corporation chooses to ignore the Labour Code, our collective agreement, their own internal documents, and precedent when doling out heavy-handed discipline. The corporation seems to have misunderstood and adopted the following meme for their compliance policy:



**The beatings will  
continue until  
morale improves**

The corporation's focus, of late, for many of the 24 meetings and much of the discipline seems to have shifted from their nearly frantic obsession with all things "Neighborhood Mail" to all things "Vehicular Safety." There were National CPC members auditing our members across the city, as part of a cross country compliance tour. Suffice to say, their alleged findings are being used by national CPC to "justify" their new focus and heavy-handed approach. 24s for all things vehicular have been on the rise, and we hope that the corporation changes gears in terms of "ensuring compliance" by giving the membership a chance to ensure they're being safe instead of their usual approach of distracting them, and negatively impacting their mental health, by arbitrarily handing out harsh discipline like Hallowe'en candy.

Separate Sort from Delivery has arrived, and as we had attempted to convey to CPC, the foreseeable problems we brought to their attention throughout the restructure process have popped up, taking the corporation by surprise. Issues arising with "bring back" mail and so forth that were identified months ago are still not being addressed appropriately, despite already having a process as outlined in the Corporate Manual System. Further issues have arisen due to assigning significantly more routes to be sorted to our routers than the established national average AND not letting them bid to ensure each position has a set number of routes has led to daily temp call-ins, in direct violation of OT and PT

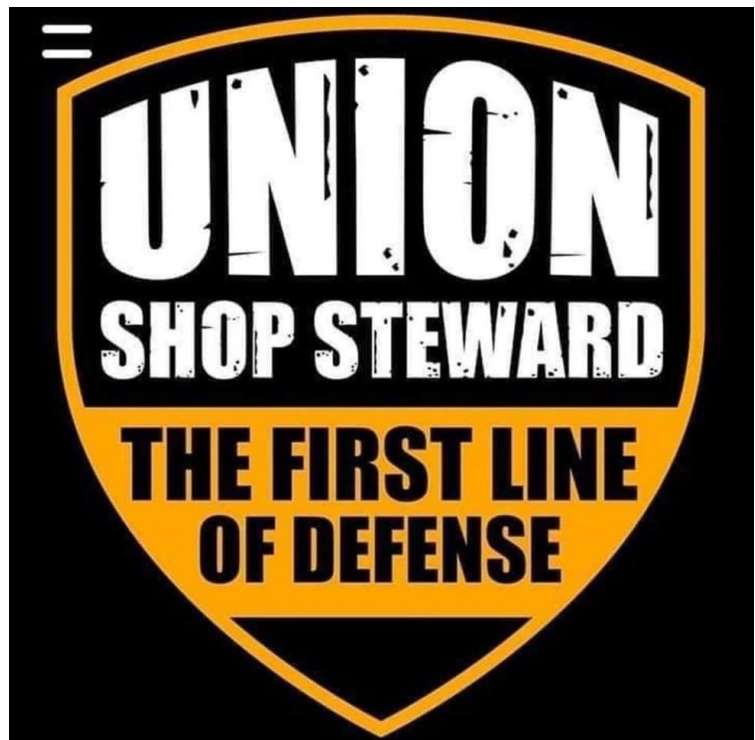
extension policy. I hope the corporation has at least remembered to ensure that, as they have to report to the staffing board for assignments daily, the routers receive their relief premium . . .

Next on the SSD docket will be all four sections of Church Depot, to be followed shortly by Moray Depot and the re-structure of Southwest Depot. Last, but certainly not least, will be our Downtown Depot, slated to be converted in 2025. The corporation has been very resistant to any and all ideas brought forward by the Local and the greater Union, and reticent to follow the established consultation process, leading to unnecessary tensions between the sides. There are better ways to achieve efficiency for their new “parcel-centric” business model, if only anyone cared to listen.

As the seasons have changed, so to have some of the faces around the Local office. Our former President, Matthew Aitken, recently stepped down. Matthew has been a polarizing figure in our Local, but those of us who have worked closely with him appreciate, and thank him for, all of his hard work and dedication, and will miss him. In a well-attended General Membership Meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup>, Sean Tugby, former Workload Structuring Officer, was elected to be the new local President for CUPW 856. Many congratulations to brother Tugby, and we all wish him the best of luck with his new position. Shortly thereafter our Internal Chief Shop Steward, Cameron Fortier, stepped down to return to his Letter Carrier roots. At our October GMM, both the position of WSO (Workload Structuring Officer) and Chief Shop Steward: Internal (which Cam lovingly dubbed CSI) will be on the docket, bringing more new faces, and new energy to your local Executive.

As always, my dear 856ers, please keep your safety front of mind, go by the book as much as possible, and don't forget to bring a steward.

In Solidarity,  
Roman McColl  
Chief Shop Steward – External



## **EXTERNAL CHIEF SHOP STEWARD**

### **SUMMER ADDITION**

Greetings and warm, sunny Salutations my fellow 856ers

The summer season is upon us, and Spring of 2023 seems to have flown by in a blur. The speed with which it flashed by is in no small part due to the ever-increasing waves of (selective) enforcement and discipline by the employer. It has been further exacerbated by the sheer volume of meetings, conferences, and Letter Carrier, RSMC, and MSC restructures that have been crammed into a very short amount of time.

Per my monthly updates, the waves of discipline being levied against our membership have been veritable tsunamis of late. The sheer volume of 24-hour interviews, and subsequent discipline, in the past few months has been nothing short of staggering. The corporation has been ramping up its use of unjustifiable “emergency suspensions” with little or no care given to meeting the minimum threshold required for the suspension to qualify as an “emergency.” Letter Carriers from multiple depots have expressed the anxiety they feel daily as a result of the boss’s latest reign of terror. Be it neighborhood mailings, vehicular infractions, “life safety” infractions, or virtually any other normally minor issue, virtually all seem to warrant an emergency suspension, and threats of extreme discipline.

Along with our normal monthly union/management meetings, both in Collection and Deliver, and at the Winnipeg Mail Processing Plant (WMPP), there have been a seemingly endless list of meetings with management, Route Measurement Officers (RMOs), Industrial Relations (IR), and so on. We have endeavored to represent our members, and their best interests, at all levels, be they with our local, regional, or national Canada Post Corporation (CPC) equivalents, on issues ranging from health and safety, to expressing our dissatisfaction with the employer’s current push towards harsh and arbitrary discipline, to our pushing for alternatives to Separate Sort and Delivery (SSD). We should all be proud of the strong, eloquent people representing us with such aplomb.

In the last 6 weeks alone, much of our Local’s leadership cadre have been all over the country to try to represent us, and our interests. Local 856 had a strong showing at CUPW’s National Convention in Toronto in the first week of May, which oversaw the voting on and implementation of changes to our National Constitution, as well as the voting on and swearing in of our Union’s National and Regional Officers. The very next week, a smaller delegation was at the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) National Convention in Montreal, representing our local, making valuable connections with like-minded people and unions, building ties to the greater Canadian labour movement, and gaining perspective and learning from the experiences of senior unionists from around our country. Finally, we had a strong showing at CUPW’s Pre-Negotiation Convention in Edmonton during the first week of June, with many of the motions put forward by our Local being given priority in the voting.

Over the last few months, we have seen many restructures across the city, affecting Urban Letter Carriers (LCs), Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMCs), and our Mail Service Couriers (MSCs). These restructures have seen the closing of the St James Depot and reintegration of RSMCs to the Southwest Depot (SWD), a full restructure of MSC routes at WMPP, and the volume count and current build happening at Northeast Depot (NED). By and large, these have gone off without too many hitches, however the employer seems to have lasered its focus on SSD, to the exclusion of any and all other ideas. This goes for the build currently happening at NED, for the already announced SSD rebuilds happening in the near future at Church Depot, and on the re-restructure that is to occur at our SWD in about a year. By all accounts, these new SSD routes will be significantly longer, with start times being

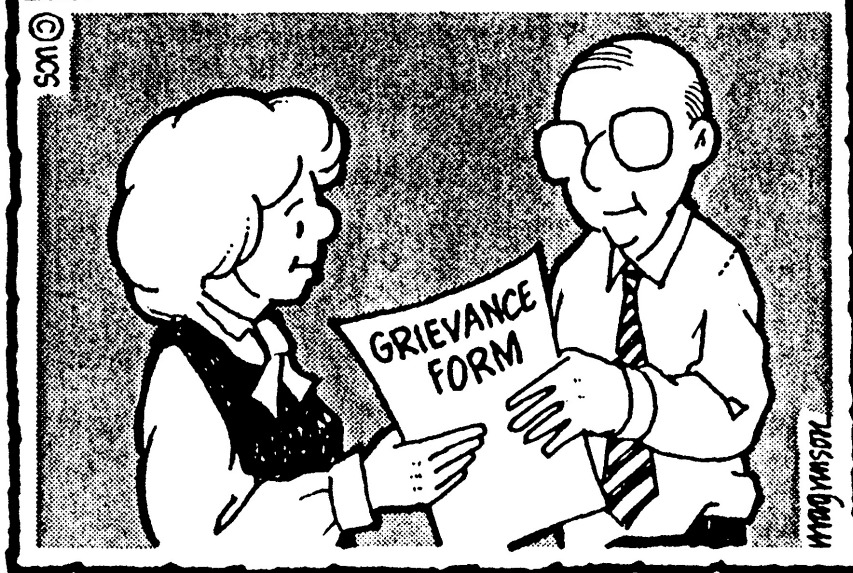
pushed back, to account for clearances and Customer Pick-ups (CPUs) on all waves. Nothing says “Make it Safe, Make it Home” quite like forcing our members to work in the dark for half the year, right?

In short, dear readers, it has been a busy quarter, and the “fun” isn’t over yet. With more meetings and restructures on the horizon, the corporation is keeping us all very busy. And with the current trend of harsh, arbitrary punishment for all things “Life Safety” and neighborhood mail, the employer is keeping much of the Local, and our shop stewards, on our collective toes. Should you happen across any of the aforementioned Executives or shop stewards, please take a moment to thank them for the work they do representing us all, be it ensuring our interests are respected or ensuring our rights are being protected. And should you be interested in learning about the rights and responsibilities of stewards, or of the roles and responsibilities of members of the Executive, please don’t hesitate to reach out. We will be having a local class to refresh some of our stewards who are coming back after a hiatus, as well as to train up new stewards, all of which will serve to better serve and represent you, our membership.

In closing, as always dear friends, please keep your safety front of mind, go by the book as much as possible, and don’t forget to bring a steward.

**THE UNION CANNOT READ YOUR MIND  
THO’ IT CAN REPRESENT YOU WELL  
IF A PROBLEM YOU SHOULD FIND  
YOUR STEWARD IS THE PERSON TO TELL**

In Solidarity,  
Roman McColl  
Chief Shop Steward – External





## Education Officer

At the time of writing this, “yesterday” was June 16<sup>th</sup>. Just a heads up.

Yesterday I went to a Valour FC game. You might be asking “what in the hell is even that?” and you'd be right to ask that, as the Winnipeg Football Club (the owners of the Bombers, as well as all of us, as the Bombers are a community owned team, which is just another reason to cheer for the blue and gold) have spent close to zero dollars on marketing for their “new” (six years old now) soccer/footie club. I was hanging out with a very good friend of mine seven years ago, having some beers as we do, and he mentioned that Winnipeg was getting a soccer team, and we made the impulse move to buy season tickets (they're very cheap, I'm no baller). Since that fateful night we've been to at least 50% of the home games, and he's even made it to an away game or two. We're not huge soccer fans, but we are fans of spectacle, and we love Winnipeg – we've made friends with visiting hockey, football, and soccer fans multiple times, gone out for drinks and shown them our fair city. In fact we're still in touch with a few of them. We believe in Winnipeg, and we bring that energy to most every facet of our lives – I deliver in what a lot of people would consider a rough area of town, and granted, I need to be aware of my surroundings when I'm delivering, but the vibrancy on display in the core of Winnipeg is intoxicating.

I digress – I went to a Valour FC game yesterday. Valour is at the mercy of the Blue Bombers' schedule, but we finally got a Friday night game five years later (we lost a year to the pandemic, as did we all). The relationship between CEO Wade Miller and the soccer fanatics has been tenable at best – most soccer clubs have a fervent supporter group that wave flags, raise Tifos, and pop smoke bombs when their team scores or wins. Wade and the rest of WFC have been very resistant to these ideas, and are basically coasting on the recent success of the Bombers and have given very little credence to the Valour faithful. They've given us scraps from the table and the best they can do is not to check our tickets when we stand wherever we want in the supporter section, and given us the “privilege” of lighting off some sanctioned smoke grenades before the game, even though literally almost every other football club in the world does it in the stands during the game when their team scores a goal. I, and a number of my fellow Valour supporters feel that this is complete trash. We are supporters of a professional football club, and we are a legitimate firm of supporters. We deserve smoke, we need smoke. No pyro no party. So last night we decided that we weren't going to wait for Wade to deign upon us from on high a license to set off some smoke grenades.

We took it upon ourselves. We smuggled in about 15 smoke bombs in our underpants, and although we had concerns that Valour was going to be held to a clean sheet due to a lack of possession, led by an inability of Forge FC to hit the net, and Rayane Yesli turning aside every shot that saw the net, Valour broke through on a set piece in the 39<sup>th</sup> minute that resulted in their first shot on net and that shot ended up in the netting (I recognize I'm using a lot of esoteric soccer terms, please bear with me). At that moment I, among with twelve or so equally pissed off friends cracked our smoke bombs and held them high, knowing that we'd definitely get kicked out and possibly banned. We didn't care about the repercussions because we knew that we had power in numbers, and also that the energy we brought to the game was what Valour FC needed, especially in a town where there is a tonne of competition for eyeballs on the game and butts in seats.

It was glorious. The smoke was so thick we couldn't see the person next to us. We were jubilant, we were excited, our team was winning after having their asses handed to them for 39 minutes. And then security came over to talk to me, as I am “very distinctive looking” (I took that as a compliment). Buddy told me that I set off a smoke bomb, and after a minute of bullshitting with him, I fully admitted that I did so, and I was proud of it. My aforementioned very good friend stepped in and told him that if I was getting kicked out, so was he. I accepted the consequences of my actions, as Henry Thoreau taught us, when we commit actions of civil disobedience, we need to expect consequence. However, when I was hauled up to the top of the stairs, a crew of 12 dudes came with me. Security was shook, they told us that we needed to leave because we broke the rules, but they also wanted to see us back at the next game. And when we were leaving, they told us “hey, don't do that again because you might get banned, but damn – it looked friggin' awesome”.

We left peaceably, went to a nearby bar to watch the Bombers game, have a couple more beers and commiserate over getting kicked out for giving a damn. We had a great time.

However, the conversation we had wasn't about how upset we were about getting kicked out. It was about how fired up we were about having made a collective display about our collective displeasure with how WFC is

treating its fans. We received some hate from some of the other fans that are focused on following the rules and trying to make gains that way, but the resultant conversation today has been entirely centred around how incredible the supporter section looked when we popped off. Valour FC chose to feature us setting off smoke bombs on all of their social media channels, in some instances a couple two-three times over. And now there are many people I have zero connection with that are advocating for smoke bombs in the supporter section when VFC wins or scores a goal. This conversation wouldn't be happening if we stuck to the rules set out by Wade Miller and the Winnipeg Football Club. It's always easier to ask for forgiveness than permission.

We missed half the game. We accepted that (and for the record, soccer is pretty boring a lot of the time, especially when you're new to the game) and moved on. Following the rules set out by the ruling class was going to get us nowhere, so we took matters into our own hands. That decision is making real change.

Bringing it back to CUPW and the issues we face – we are under attack. The corporation has apparently stated that it is going to bring SSD (Separate Sort and Delivery) to every depot (even you, small depots that still use wooden cases) to every letter carrier depot in the country in the next five years. Automation is coming to plants across the country. CMB conversion hangs over us like the Sword of Damocles every year that CPC posts a loss due to their creative bookkeeping. The Liberal party, the purported “friend of the middle class” is apparently opening up the postal charter to consider the idea of every other day delivery. All of these issues can and will result in job losses. This is a real threat that we are facing. Filing national grievances that are heard by arbitrators with a vested interest in the capitalist system isn't doing a thing. We're losing every one of those. We are going to continue to lose those if the corporation and the ruling government doesn't believe we have the meddle to fight back. We have a strong and proud history of fighting the corporation and the capitalist system when it comes to important rights that postal workers and workers the nationwide deserve to have. We set the bar in our union, CUPW and LCUC went on strike to win competitive wages, maternity leave, pushed back against privatization, wage equity for RSMCs, and many other things that we take for granted at this point.

The feeling of having a critical mass of homies leaving the game with last night lit a fire within me. We wanted something, our fellow supporters were asking the corporation for it and we were given table scraps – a two year extension of our contract when inflation was shooting through the roof during a time when we were more vital to the country functioning is a slap in the face. We haven't been more important to the citizens of Canada than we have been over the past three years. It's time to unite, it's time to embrace our power in numbers. United we stand, divided we fall. They got the guns but we got the numbers. Pick your favourite well-worn statement, they all fit – we need to work together to show the corporation and the government that we won't take any rollbacks this round of negotiations. Inflation is through the roof, Tiff Macklem and the Bank of Canada is raising interest rates at a more aggressive rate than we've seen in our lifetimes, and corporate profits remain very high. This fight isn't just for us, it's for all the workers of Canada. The workers are the ones that create the profits with our labour, and we should be properly remunerated for such, as well as maintaining the benefits and job security that the previous generations of postal workers fought for.

Negotiating with an employer that wants nothing but to slash the cost of labour by using automation and forcing long tenured postal workers into retirement isn't going to get us anywhere if we're not united. Bringing it back to the soccer match, a few of us that got removed from the game have been in somewhat heated discussions with some of those who have been in conversation with the Winnipeg Football Club about the game day experience, including the lighting of smoke bombs. They have been happy to accept whatever scraps the club throws at them, and are upset that our actions may have put those table scraps at risk. I am not content to take the scraps. We created more positive change through one protest of collective action than they have made in five years.

The grievance system is broken. Leaving decisions about two bundle delivery, SSD, post office closures, and automation in the hands of an arbitrator has gone poorly for us again and again. If we want to make a change, the rank and file need to be the ones leading the charge, not someone in an office thousands of miles away filing a grievance about something that can drastically affect our jobs. It's our fight and we need all hands on deck.

Tyler Nielsen

Education Officer

The National Day of Truth and Reconciliation is for all Canadians on September 30th .

While it may be another day off, with pay, for Canadian Postal Workers, it's important to share a basic understanding the day's importance to Indigenous people. Also, the effects it's had on our people with an effort and share our colonized history.

It's been 8 years since the Truth and Reconciliation commission created a report on the history and legacy of Canada's Indian Residential school system.

Through this process the commission created 94 calls to action, 94 steps that ALL levels of Canadian Government must take towards respectfully understanding the history of Indigenous peoples and to create a path together moving forward.

The Honorable Justice Murray Sinclair sums it up, "Achieving reconciliation is like climbing a mountain – we must proceed a step at a time. It will not always be easy. There will be storms, there will be obstacles, but we cannot allow ourselves to be daunted by the task because our goal is just and also necessary... Many people want to do their part for reconciliation but don't know where to start... Education is what got us into this mess, and education will get us out of it."

Before Canada formed there existed an entire nation of Indigenous tribes with their own form of governance here on Turtle Island. The caregivers and elders of this land were open and gentle to new settlers.

The settlers were not so benevolent. They ripped children from their traditional community and families, incarcerating them in Residential Schools (that were typically disguised as churches.)

These institutions stripped the young people of their spirit culturally, mentally, emotionally, and physically. Our Canadian Government was responsible for rounding up a whole nation and assimilating their culture and religion.

The Government of Canada has stated that it continues to be committed to a renewed relationship with Indigenous Peoples based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

Consider this traumatic legacy and do everything in your power to understand your place in reconciling with our First Nations. Then and only then will we truly be a multicultural country. On this day, please consider the choices and impacts of the Canadian government in its desire to instill shame amongst Indigenous children, to strip away their collective identities, to torture, murder and abuse the most vulnerable.

Most of all, on the Day of Truth and Reconciliation, it is important to remember these children. To honor their memory and spirit. Increasingly more unmarked graves of these children are being discovered.

Consider this traumatic legacy and do everything in your power to understand your place in reconciling with First Nations.

Wear orange to honor the children.

PO4-WMPP  
Miigwetch, Maarsi,  
All my relations.





**Winnipeg Local 856**  
**NOTICE of GENERAL**  
**MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

When? Saturday October 14th 9:00am .

Where? Bronx Park Community Center

**New Temps Looking for Corporate Apparel?**

The local office has a few boxes of clothing including shirts, pants, jackets, gators etc. If you are new and do not receive clothing credits yet please feel free to stop by the office to look through some gear.



changes to your personal contact information

If you would like to submit an article for a future issue, or you have a work-related photo you would like to share The communications committee is always looking for content and submissions. Email your suggestions, submissions, and rants to:

[vicepresident@cupwwpg.ca](mailto:vicepresident@cupwwpg.ca)

