

Banking on a future for Canada Post

PERSPECTIVE

Banking on a Future for Canada Post

Postal unions and groups stood before a giant piggy bank emblazoned with the words “Banking on a Future for Canada Post” and called for financial and banking services at post offices during a media conference on October 16th.



Speakers at CUPW's media conference on postal banking (from left to right): Grace Iyabosa, ACORN Canada; Paul Slomp, NFU; Diane Rochon, ACORN Canada; Denis Lemelin, National President, CUPW; Brenda McAuley, National President, CPAA.

“We thought Canada Post’s anniversary on October 16th would be a good time to talk about what our public post office needs to do to survive and prosper in the future,” said Denis Lemelin, National President of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW).

The media conference, which was organized by CUPW, was attended by representatives of CUPW, the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association (CPAA), the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) and the National Farmers Union (NFU). The Canadian Community Reinvestment Coalition (CCRC) was unable to attend but sent a statement.

Brenda McAuley, National President of CPAA, highlighted Canada Post’s fixation on cuts and need for money-making services like postal banking. Diane Rochon, a national spokesperson for ACORN Canada said, “From high fees to lack of service, banks are not meeting low income people’s needs in Canada.” Paul Slomp, 2nd Vice-President of Operations at NFU, indicated that banks are not meeting the needs of rural communities either. He said the NFU “supports the provision of financial and banking services via a credit union, whether as a partner or a

stand-alone Canada Post bank to maintain community control over financial services and to encourage investments in the local community.” CCPR’s Duff Conacher pointed out “Canada is far behind many other countries in making changes to ensure access to basic banking services for everyone, as many other countries have already implemented banking at postal outlets.” Brother Lemelin added, “There is support and compelling evidence that financial and banking services would help the corporation preserve service and improve its financial picture.”

Earlier this year, CUPW produced a paper entitled *Banking on a Future for Posts* showing that postal banking is needed and lucrative. The union also asked the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) to do an independent study on the feasibility of adding financial and banking services at Canada Post. The study, entitled *Why Canada Needs Postal Banking*, was released on October 9th. It looks at the changing banking environment in our country as well as our post office’s experience with banking. In addition, it reviews the status of postal banking around the world, highlighting five successful models in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Switzerland and New Zealand. Having established that there is a need for improved financial services in our country and viable models in other countries, the study concludes by suggesting possible models for postal banking in Canada.

QMS must return to bargaining table

Three years after certification, and there’s still no first collective agreement for bike and walking couriers at Quick Messenger Service (QMS) in Toronto. The company has been engaging in stall tactics and legal wrangling to avoid its obligation to bargain in good faith.

The Toronto Courier Local is escalating its actions to push QMS management back to the bargaining table. It held a benefit for its strike fund on September 13, 2013 and an information picket on September 27, 2013. More activities are planned in the coming months.

The process to date

The company has avoided meeting with the union and when they did meet, failed to bargain in good faith. The company challenged the federal jurisdiction of the bargaining unit; now the group is certified provincially. The company also changed terms and conditions of work for couriers in two separate cases, for which CUPW filed unfair labour practice complaints.

The employer has refused to negotiate:

- specified [statutory holidays] and scheduled leave [vacation pay] provisions;
- remuneration provisions; and
- commission rates provisions.

The issue of independent contractor status

One of the key issues that has made negotiations difficult is the insistence of the company and the entire sector to classify the workers as independent contractors. This means the workers:

- receive no vacation pay or paid statutory holidays;
- frequently are paid less than minimum wage;
- do not have access to employment insurance; and
- usually are not covered by worker’s compensation protections.

Page 2
Editorial:
Forward
action

Page 2
December 3
is the
International Day
of Persons with
Disabilities

Page 3
Two-Bundle
delivery ruled
unsafe

Page 3
PublicPostOffice.ca

Page 3
Together fairness
works campaign

Page 4
RSMC Reaching
Device (RRD)
and products



Page 4
Roundtable:
Sharing our
child care
experiences

Continued on page 2

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RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO
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OTTAWA ON K2P 1Y3



Forward action

highlight our position. We are developing a broad coalition in favour of service expansion at Canada Post.

Canada Post is failing its obligations

Postal Transformation came with a promise that services to the public would be improved. Canada Post is obliged to eliminate the adverse affects of technological change. But every day, local executive committee members are exposing the employer's negligence and other failings, and enforcing our working conditions and our health and safety provisions. We also have to pursue management to meet its mail delivery commitments.

Fighting for our future

We are well aware of the situation that Canada Post faces. We know that lettermail, which accounts

for 60% of its revenues, is in decline and that continued financial self-sufficiency will require major changes. Canada Post's retail and distribution network, the largest in the country, can drive these changes. We're opposing the cuts with a postcard campaign that condemns post office closures and the new smaller retail model, and calls for an unprecedented public debate as part of the *Canadian Postal Service Charter* review in 2014. We know from our recent polls that we will find support with the public, who are affected along with us by postal service cuts.

Our struggle is political

The struggle we face is political. Since the 2011 strike/lockout, the employer has received unconditional support from the Harper government. In 2012 and 2013,

the government adopted budget measures that attack our working conditions. And things are unlikely to get any better. Lisa Raitt, now the minister responsible for Canada Post, stated publicly and bluntly that door-to-door delivery could be stopped without any changes to the *Canadian Postal Service Charter*. We know that this government will not hesitate to adopt union-busting measures against us and against the public and universal postal service.

An ongoing battle

Today, to protect the public postal service means to defend the labour laws our society has achieved through the democratic process. That is why we have joined the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Together Fairness Works campaign to reassert the value of

the labour movement's contributions to everyone's well-being. This is also part of revving up for the next federal election, when labour issues must be a factor.

All this work will only achieve results if everyone steps up. Every time I go on the work floor, I tell members that this is a fight for survival – ours, and the survival of the universal public postal service. This is the fight of our lives, and it depends on each and every one of us getting involved!

In Solidarity,

Denis Lemelin
National President

Step by step, we are implementing our action plan as adopted at the National Presidents' meeting in April. Our four coordinators started work in the fall, and are in contact with locals to execute every facet of the plan.

A recent step was to raise the public profile of our position on financial and banking services. Following the publication of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) study (see cover story), we unveiled our inflatable piggy bank, which we will use to

Continued from front page

QMS must return to bargaining table

To address this issue, CUPW helped 22 couriers file employment standards claims in September 2012. Unfortunately, the investigator issued decisions maintaining independent contractor status. This runs counter to many previous similar cases in other jurisdictions. The union has filed appeals in 21 of the cases and will continue the struggle for couriers' employment rights.

The union recently filed for first contract arbitration with the Ontario Labour Relations Board. However, the mediator does not want to hear the case until there is a decision on the employment standards claims.

Act now to support QMS couriers!

- Send a letter or email to QMS boss, Jason Etheridge, telling him to bargain a good contract at www.cupw.ca/qms.
- Send a letter or email to the Ontario Minister of Labour, Yasir Naqvi, calling for couriers to be covered by employment standards legislation at www.cupw.ca/qms.
- If you're in the Toronto area, check out whether any solidarity activities are happening at www.cupw.ca/qms.



December 3 is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD2013). Disabilities can take many forms — both visible and invisible. The United Nations reports that more than a billion people, or 15 per cent of the world population, live with disabilities. In Canada and Quebec as of 2006, roughly 4.4 million (or 14% of the population) live with some form of disability, and this is expected to grow as the population ages.

The National Human Rights Committee created this poster to urge everyone to reflect on all persons with disabilities and see them without prejudice. They have the same needs, desires, hopes and dreams as everyone and deserve to be treated equally with dignity and respect. Celebrate IDPD2013 with a commitment to building improved communities and workplaces that are accessible, inclusive and accommodating for all.

CUPW PERSPECTIVE

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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.

Finally: Two-Bundle delivery ruled unsafe

After almost 3 years of hearings, the Union has won a crucial decision against Canada Post’s postal transformation two-bundle delivery method.

In an 89-page judgement, Arbitrator Kevin Burkett found the two-bundle method more dangerous than the one-bundle method. The arbitrator added that Canada Post violated both the *Labour Code* and the collective agreement by failing to conduct a thorough workplace risk assessment of the two-bundle delivery method.

Burkett said the two-bundle delivery method “presents a greater risk of slip, trip and fall injuries to letter carriers than the one bundle delivery method” because the two-bundle method “compromises the forward field of vision to a statistically significant degree.”

In looking at the potential for musculoskeletal injuries with the two-bundle delivery method, Arbitrator Burkett stated that the evidence before him left it an open question, on which he was unable to rule. This, he noted, underscored the need for a thorough workplace risk assessment.

In writing about the workplace risk assessment, Burkett pointed to Arbitrator Keller’s recent award dealing with the new Multi-Line Optical Character Reader (MLOCR), which ordered an ergonomic study by an independent 3rd party be conducted under the aegis of the national joint health and safety committee. Arbitrator Burkett left the solutions to the problems he identified for the two parties to agree upon. Should the parties be unable to agree on suitable remedies, however, the issue goes back to the Arbitrator.

Article 47–route restructure information

Hearings continue before Arbitrator Burkett on Canada Post’s refusal to share with the Union the details needed for the Union to properly check PT route restructures. The parties are also meeting to see if they can reach an agreement on the information to be shared.

Article 29 issues before Keller

The Union also challenged the negative parts of PT under our technological change clause in the contract (Article 29) – and on May 30th won a decision from Arbitrator Keller on the adverse effects on Group One which ordered:

- An independent third party ergonomic assessment of the MLOCR, and
- A study on how the adverse effects of the IDC Cart can be eliminated or minimized. From June 1st through October 31st there have been 16 days of hearings on Group 2 issues. The Union presented letter carrier witnesses from Montreal, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Edmonton.

Adverse effects identified in testimony so far include the:

- Impact of excessive overtime and the 2nd wave on family life,
- Problems and dangers of delivering mail in the dark (due to overtime and the 2nd wave),
- Problems faced when 96% of the routes are motorized, but some letter carriers do not have drivers’ licenses,
- Impact of the shared case and the two waves on householder preparation and delivery,
- Refusal by CPC to properly accommodate letter carriers who cannot manage the multi-bundle system, and
- Impact on accommodated employees in Label Redirection and Depot Assistant positions. Further hearings before Keller are scheduled in November and December, and we are seeking dates in 2014.

CUPW’s action plan aims to protect public postal services. We are fighting closures, downsizing, cutbacks, privatization and deregulation. We are also fighting for improvements to the Canadian Postal Service Charter and for postal banking at postal outlets.

You can find out more about these initiatives, take action and get involved at:

PublicPostOffice.ca

Your public post office delivers

Say no to cutbacks, privatization and deregulation

Together Fairness Works Campaign

While changing the postal service, Canada Post and the federal government should consider what’s fair to workers, but they’re not. And this situation is about to get worse. Conservative politicians are setting the stage to encourage workers to stop paying dues, yet continue to reap all of the benefits that their co-workers pay dues for. That’s not right. It’s unethical and it’s unfair. Their proposals aim to divide us, make us weaker and fuel workplace conflicts. If they succeed, we won’t be able to properly represent you, wages will be driven down and everyone will be worse off. To prevent that, we must stand together.

In conjunction with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ) in Quebec, CUPW is involved in a sustained initiative to have more than 3 million conversations with members just like you. You may have already seen the CLC fairness works advertisements on television. Over the next several months we hope to have one-to-one, face-to-face, member-to-member conversations so that we can listen to your concerns.

We are setting up a national structure to help us conduct this initiative, but we can always use your help at the local level.

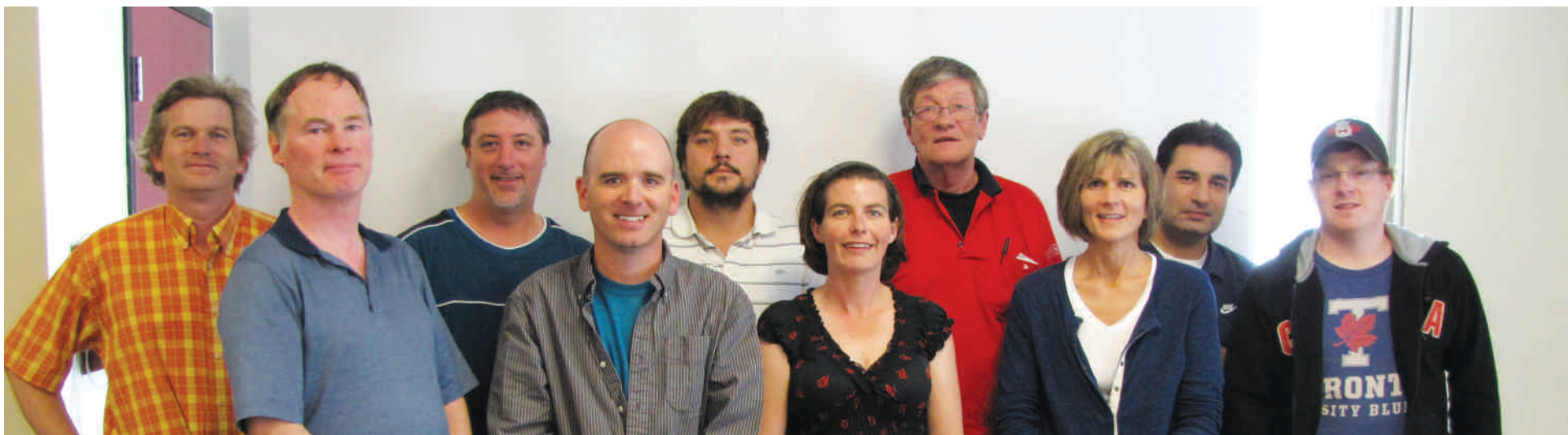
Please contact your local to get involved or speak with your union representatives when they come around to talk to you.

Also, be sure to check out the CLC’s web site:

fairnessworks.ca

together

FAIRNESS WORKS



Chris Pleasants, Dan Marks, Dwayne Pearson, Shane Hodgson, Sébastien Bouchard, Andrea Barbe, Tony Sidnbois, Barb McMillan, Ziad ElZein, Trenholm Robertson

First session RSMC RRD (RSMC Reaching Device) Peer trainers

Rural Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMC) peer trainers will train RSMC to safely use the RSMC Reaching Device (RRD) and products.

CUPW has trained trainers from all regions. 69 per cent of the RRD peer trainers are Sisters (67 per cent of RSMC members are female). They will train RSMCs with Road Side Mail Boxes (RMB) who will be using the reaching device.

Sixty-two per cent of current RSMC routes have RMBs, with an average of 162 boxes per route. Since 2004, members have experienced ergonomic problems reaching across the passenger window to deliver to RMBs. In 2007 a joint ergonomic study identified significant risk factors in the delivery method for RMB.

As an interim solution, ergonomic assistants were provided in certain conditions, until a permanent solution could be found. On September 5, 2012, CUPW and Canada Post Corporation signed an agreement on using the RRD. Five hundred routes received the first generation of RRD and products. A third party was used to provide an independent ergonomic assessment of the work method, RRD and devices.

RRD deployment is scheduled to start in the fall of 2013 and continue into 2014.



RRD peer trainer Barb McMillan demonstrates use of the reaching device

We continue to negotiate on the development of the tools. Deployment of the second generation RRD and products will also start with 500 routes. When this is completed, the peer trainers will be in offices where RSMCs have an ergonomic complaint and assistance on routes.

Seven training sessions have taken place in Ottawa, Quebec City, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax. More sessions will be scheduled.

Roundtable: Sharing our child care experiences

At the CUPW Human Rights Committee meeting, members broke into groups to hold kitchen-table conversations as part of the Rethink Child care campaign. This is an edited excerpt of the conversation with the Aboriginal Working Group.

How has childcare affected your life, work, community or family?

Darlene Kaboni: When I started at the post office in '87, I couldn't find anybody who I could trust to watch my child because I was on the graveyard shift. That was a big thing for me, to be able to leave my child and trust somebody to leave him with. I was fortunate enough to have family come and live with

me. When my siblings went to college and university, they stayed with me. I didn't charge them anything and in return they were there to watch him while I worked graveyard. So, I was fortunate in that sense but I do know that not everybody is as fortunate as that.

Jenny Butler: Well for five years I was a term with Canada Post and of course I had to work a couple of jobs because of being a term. They can give you a minimum of an hour coming in and you don't know which day and what time—it could be midnights, afternoons or day shift. A lot of the times I could only accept late afternoons or midnight shift. Then when I got permanent, the only childcare I could do to work around with my family life was the graveyard shift. I have been on graveyard shift for

17 years now and my daughter just turned 17 in February.

Allan Kakaway: It was in Edmonton in the early '90s when I took my child to childcare. She was just about 3 years old then and we went to pick her up at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon... They couldn't find my daughter and it was horrifying, like holy smokes, I mean you guys don't know where she went? We looked all over the place and finally after about 20 minutes, she came walking with a big smile on her face and said, "Daddy, I just went to the wash-room by myself". You know, I had to smile and say, "wow, great". But the feeling about that: your daughter is not there, like there's three people working there that didn't know where she went and that was horrifying.

Debbie Bird: As a single parent, I had to put my kids in daycare, and it was still not a good situation but I had to work. There were some days I didn't know where I was going to take my kids, who I was going to leave them with—so much guilt. One day I asked my kids how they did. They said, oh, their babysitter had been sick all day so all they did was sit on the bed with her, and that's how I left my 3 and 5 year old to spend their day.

It shouldn't have to be this way! Share your stories. Plan your own kitchen table conversation. Find out more about the campaign at rethinkchildcare.ca or by contacting infochildcare@cupw-sttp.org.