

NEWSLETTER / BULLETIN



PAY EQUITY - DECADES OF FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE ÉQUITÉ SALARIALE - DES DÉCENNIES DE COMBAT POUR LA JUSTICE

OCTOBER 2007

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The summer is over, back to work and work it is...

I hope everybody enjoyed a nice and relaxing summer with their families, friends and their communities.

The National Office has been working very closely with the Purolator group during the summer months to be able to fix problems with scheduling and recruiting new employees to replace those that have quit due to the unstable working environment and working conditions. One of the issues is that this employer is making its employees travel an outrageous distance to work, from nearly one end of the lower mainland and back on an on-going basis, while we at Canada Post Corporation enjoy going to work at the same location, and work consistent hours for the most part. Can you imagine having to travel from your home in Port Coquitlam BC to your work site in North Vancouver BC day in and day out? And to make matters worse, most employees take public transit to get to and from work. Imagine having to travel two (2) hours or more for a five (5) hour shift and doing that everyday, or even being sent to three (3) or more different work locations across the lower mainland in one week.

I can tell you that I have visited several of their stores where our members work, and driving alone through Vancouver was impossible. I tip my hat to those members who have to take public transit. Let me give you another example; one of our members lives in New Westminister BC and in order to get to their-scheduled location that week in North Vancouver, they had to take a Skytrain to the Seabus, take the Seabus to North Vancouver and then take a bus from there to get to the retail store. While it might not be the most ridiculous thing an employer has done, it sure is up there with making female workers wait nearly a quarter century for equal pay.

I will admit that the Purolator management has been trying to hire more employees to cover the shifts and work load, but considering that the start pay is a little less than \$13 dollars an hour, there are no guaranteed benefits, no stability in their shifts and work location and no pension contribution from the employer, how many people do you think would want to work for what is being offered? They are very fortunate in my opinion to have the hard working and dedicated employees that they have now. However in the last three (3) months, five (5) employees have quit because they can no longer work in such an unstable work environment.

There are many other outstanding issues that need to be dealt with and it appears that the more we fix matters, the more there is to fix. I am extremely pleased with the support and encouragement that the members from the UPCE Purolator group, and I, in turn, encourage them to continue bringing their issues and problems to the attention of their union representatives.

It goes to show you that if you come forward and talk with your union representatives, things do move forward. It always surprises me when people are afraid to talk to their union representative because they are concerned management might not like them anymore. Believe me, if managers don't like you for dealing with matters that affect you, then in my view they shouldn't be managers in the first place.

We need to start working together, united and in solidarity, if we want to improve our collective agreement or even to keep status quo. We are about to start the bargaining process and if we don't continue to make our voices heard, we have lost before we have even started. Canada Post Corporation isn't any different from Purolator. They are employers and they will give you nothing if they know you will accept it.

We have to push forward and make change happen. And yes, we are all afraid of the word "STRIKE" but that word is only there to remind both of our employers that we will strike if we have to and **fight because we have to, not because we can**. I truly believe that if we together, stand shoulder to shoulder from coast to coast to coast, we can make a difference. You have heard this before and I will keep repeating it until we all ACTION IT. If we don't, then what we get is what we deserve and if anybody thinks they deserve less money, less benefits, less pension, less of anything, then they might as well go work for WAL-MART.

If the theme's of both our employers is respect, then they need to start showing it at the bargaining process, if another union within our employers make gains then why wouldn't the employer do the same for the UPCE group. That is respect and fairness.

It is true that our employers are not the worst out there, but their track record on labour matters really isn't good and if we can make improvements this round, then we will accomplish something.

The future is now and is yours to protect. Remember, if we don't have to fight then why should we fight, but from the beginning to the end we need to stand firm on what we deserve or else we will be forced to fight.

On a more positive note, I am extremely pleased to announce that the Union of Postal Communications Employees has recently appointed Sister Carly Crawford from the Purolator local 20095 to the position of National Youth Representative. This vibrant, enthusiastic young woman comes from a good union principled background before coming to Purolator in early 2006 as a Christmas worker. She was formerly a local steward for the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), and has since been a steward for her Purolator Local. We are glad to have her working with us and with the younger workers in UPCE and the PSAC to engage younger members to participate in their union and to promote succession planning both within the union and the workplace. She has taken several union courses to assist her fellow coworkers in their fight for justice and I would like to take this opportunity to wish her well in her new role. You can reach her by email at UPCEYouth@psac.com

The UPCE national office and the newly appointed Youth representative Sister Crawford will be finalizing a survey that will be sent out to the membership to get some feedback from the youth workers of UPCE.

In closing, 2008 is soon upon us and we need to start thinking about our future as members and as a Union. The following year will be an extremely busy one with the bargaining conference, PSAC region conventions, bargaining with both groups within UPCE, Canada Post and Purolator and in between bargaining and conferences we will be holding our UPCE Triennial Convention in September 2008. Needless to say we will all be working hard to continue representing UPCE membership to the best of our abilities, but above all we will be working towards improving both collective agreements, moving forward to strengthen our Union and the future of our great organization called the Union of Postal Communications employees.

Fraternally yours,



Richard L. Des Lauriers
National President
Union of Postal Communications Employees

