



THE VOICE 626 OF THE LOCAL

The Official News Letter of the Toronto Local - Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)

INTENSE TALKS FOR NEW CONTRACTS UNDERWAY

By Tom Godfrey

Negotiations are underway behind closed doors in Ottawa for new CUPW Urban and RSMC collective agreements. Both parties are being tight-lipped about the talks which are taking place with the help of a mediator, who was appointed last November by the Minister of Labour to assist both sides.

“Mediation this early in the process is meant to further the concerns and needs of the membership by ensuring that Canada Post hears the issues and problems on the work floor,” wrote Sylvain Lapointe, the Union’s Chief Negotiator, Urban Bargaining Unit, in an update.

Lapointe said the Union will participate in the bargaining process in good faith and is hopeful a mediator will help in negotiating collective agreements that will meet the needs of both bargaining units and improve services to the public.

The CUPW Urban Operations collective agreement expired on January 31, 2018 and the RSMC collective agreement on December 31, 2017.

Officials said under the Canada Labour Code the collective agreements continue to apply until the Union obtains a right to strike, and the employer, the right to lockout.

“We are not anywhere near this stage,” the bargaining members said. “We are still entitled to the same working conditions, wages and benefits as last year.”

Lapointe said any violation of these provisions by management is just as much a violation as it would have been before the expiry date.

Jessica McDonald, Chair of the Board of Directors of Canada Post, has said that she plans to work with the Crown company’s 64,000 employees.

“The first priority for our leadership team will be to focus on a collaborative and positive relationship with Canada Post’s employees and the unions that represent them,” McDonald said last January 24 in an announcement on the continuation of door-to-door delivery at a sorting plant in Mississauga. CUPW Toronto Local officials say they are disappointed that full postal delivery service was not restored to Canadians by the Liberal government but are encouraged that door-to-door service will resume.

“We are very frustrated and disappointed that community mailboxes will not be restored as we were previously promised,” said Megan Whitfield, president of CUPW Toronto Local.

DOOR-TO-DOOR HERE TO STAY



CUPW Toronto Local officials say they are disappointed that full postal delivery service was not restored to Canadians by the Liberal government but are encouraged that door-to-door service will resume.

“We are not happy that community mailboxes will not be restored,” said Megan Whitfield, president of CUPW Toronto Local, which is the largest in Canada. “We are disappointed but at the same time door-to-door will continue and that is good for our members.”

She was among of a number of union officials who met with Carla Qualtrough, the new Minister of Public Services and Procurement, which includes Canada Post Corp. (CPC), and Jessica McDonald, Chair of Canada Post’s Board of Directors, at a Mississauga sorting plant for a January 24 announcement.

Qualtrough said she was immediately terminating a CPC program of converting door-to-door delivery to community mailboxes. Those whose services were not changed will continue to receive their mail. She said an advisory panel will be created to look into expanding the accessibility and delivery of services for seniors and those with disabilities.

Qualtrough said the CPC will be reclassified under the Financial Administration Act so it can reinvest its

profits into improving service and innovation.

The company will also spend more to promote and make its remittance services more affordable in a bid to increase its market share in these products, she said.

An ‘open, transparent and merit-based selection process’ is also underway to find a replacement for CEO Deepak Chopra, who is leaving on March 31 after a seven-year tenure. In addition, many new faces are being appointed to sit on its Board of Directors to help guide the company into the future.

“The new leadership will reflect greater diversity and boarder perspectives, including labour,”

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NEW STAMPS COMMEMORATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

By Tom Godfrey

Canada Post in February released its 2018 Black History Month stamps featuring well-known members of Toronto's Black community, Kathleen (Kay) Livingstone and Lincoln M. Alexander, who



“shattered barriers for visible minorities in Canada.”

Alexander, a lawyer, was the first Black to be elected to the House of Commons in 1968 to represent the riding of Hamilton West, which he represented until 1980. He was appointed to the federal Cabinet in 1979 and named as the 24th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario in 1985.

He encouraged countless youth to pursue their dreams, often telling them: “I did it. You can. You will.” Alexander served from 1942 to 1945 in the Royal Canadian Air Force and in 1992 was appointed to the Order of Ontario and became a Companion of the Order of Canada.

Livingstone, who was born in London, Ont., in 1919, was a well-known personality who in 1942 hosted her

own radio program in Ottawa. She later hosted other shows in Toronto. Her father was an assistant judge in the local juvenile court and her parents founded the Dawn of Tomorrow newspaper which covered the growing Black community.

She also performed in amateur and professional theatrical productions and was referred to as “one of Canada’s leading Black actresses” during this period.

Livingstone founded the Canadian Negro Women’s Association in the 1950s, organized the first National Congress of Black Women and in 1975 launched the Congress of Black Women of Canada, a nationwide organization dedicated to the welfare of women and their families.

She was among a group of activists who formed a calypso competition to raise funds that was developed into the hugely popular Caribana festival more than 50 years ago.



She also belonged to the United Nations Association of Canada, Appeal Board of Legal Aid and the National Black Coalition.

Union poster shines on Black History Month

CUPW Toronto Local officials were busy with Black History Month activities as a commemorative poster was issued by the union to help mark some milestones and events in the community.

The beautiful poster focuses on Hogan’s Alley, the first and last area in Vancouver with a large and active Black community.

The ethnically-diverse area was home to many Blacks, along with other nationalities, since it was affordable and close to the railroads, where many of them worked.

The city’s only Black church, the African Methodist Episcopal Fountain Chapel, was located there from 1918 to 1985 when it was sold off since most of the community had been moved out.

The bustling neighbourhood was home to Nora Hendrix, the grandmother of legendary rock guitarist, Jimi Hendrix, who was a community activist there from the 1920s to the 60s. She helped co-found the Chapel.

Nora was immortalized on a Canada Post Black History stamp in 2014. As a child, Jimi, attended school and often visited his granny in Hogan’s Alley.

Another woman from the neighbourhood who went on to fame was Eleanor Collins, the first Black woman to host a national TV show in North America.

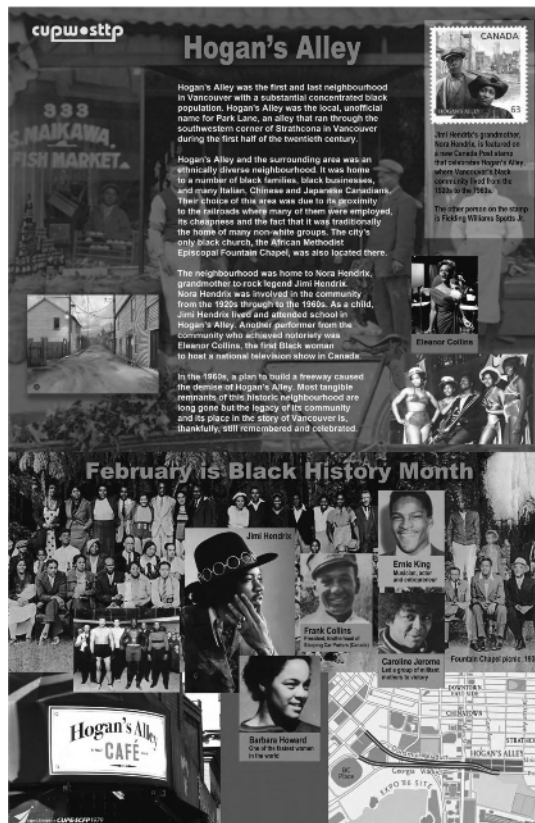
Known as “Vancouver’s first lady of jazz”, Collins started off at the CBC and had her own national television series, The Eleanor Show that ran in 1954 and resurrected in 1964. “She

could start fires by rubbing two notes together,” wrote a music critic at the time.

She was the first black artist in North America to star in her own national television series. She was even ahead of Nat King Cole, who in 1956 became the first Black male performer to star in his own show on American television.

Ironically, her parents were part of the migration of Black settlers from Oklahoma who responded to the Canadian government’s promotion to settle the prairies in 1910.

The Hogan’s Alley neighbourhood was slowly forced out in the 1960s as city leaders sought to build a highway. Many residents were displaced by the city’s slum clearance programs of the 1950s and 1960s.



Here in Toronto, there was a major Black History celebration put on by the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) called “Celebrating our Past, Taking Action for Our Future.”

“By working in solidarity with Black and racialized workers across Canada we will continue the legacy of our ancestors to challenge anti-black racism in our times,” according to CBTU officials.

“This is an important month for African Canadians and other people of colour,” said Megan Whitfield, president of the Toronto Local. “It is a time to pause and reflect on how far we have advanced and so how much further we have to go.”

Passings



Workers at Gateway are still stunned by the sudden passing of Mirella Mootoooveran, a long-time CUPW Toronto Local member and Canada Post employee. Many of her co-workers packed a chapel in Maple last January 26 to celebrate her short life. She was 46. Mirella most recently worked as a forklift driver at Gateway East. She will be missed by many.

Get Them to the Greek

Workers at Gateway get ready to dig in at a Post Peak Season dinner provided free to all staff in January in recognition for their hard work during the Christmas season. The Greek food was actually quite good. However one does wonder at the actions of management to provide its workers with free food for another profitable Christmas season through all of our hard work & yet they can't see clear to give us our CTI as per appendix ii of the collective agreement.



HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD



CUPW Toronto Local 4th V-P Jane Marsh (Above) with Peel Labour Council Human Rights award she was presented with for her ongoing role in union activism including the Local's campaign with other organizations for more beds for the homeless in Toronto and the fair treatment for Tim Horton workers.

“DOOR TO DOOR” CONT’ PAGE 1

Qualtrough promised. “Our government is laying the foundation for the long-term renewal of Canada Post so that it can continue to connect Canadians from coast-to-coast.”

Newly-appointed chair McDonald said her top priority is obtaining a smooth and

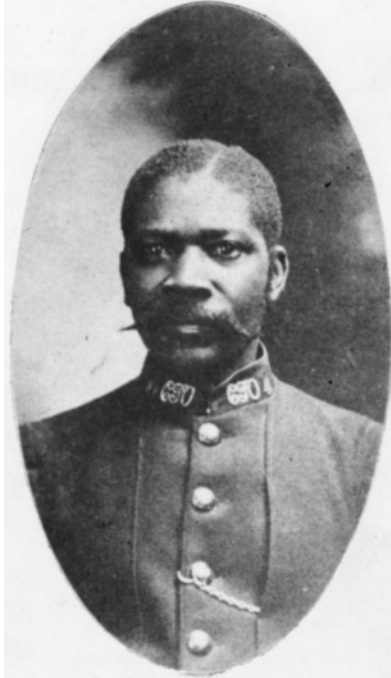
working relationship with staff and unions.

A CPC series of surveys have shown that 94% of Canadians say the ability to send and receive mail is highly important to them, while 91% of Canadians and 83% of businesses surveyed say they are satisfied with the services we deliver.

Our CUPW Brothers and Sisters in 2016 delivered 8.4 billion pieces of mail to 16 million addresses across Canada; including two out of every three parcels ordered online by Canadians. Last holiday season the company experienced the highest volume in parcel deliveries in recent history.

Legacy of Postie Jackson lives on after 100-years

By Tom Godfrey



CUPW Toronto Local officials have been meeting with federal politicians in a bid to have Albert Jackson, the country's first black mailman, commemorated on a Canadian postal stamp some 100 years after his death. Union officials have met with some members of the Liberal government's Black caucus, who are also working to have Jackson placed on a stamp possibly for next year's Black History Month.

Jackson was the youngest of seven children. His mom, Ann Maria Jackson, fled to Canada from Delaware through

the use of the Underground Railroad, a clandestine route used to smuggle slaves up north from the U.S. to escape slavery. It was the sale of Jackson's two older siblings into slavery that forced the family to flee to Canada in 1859.

Jackson was appointed by the federal government to be a mail carrier in May 1882. It was at the time an important job for a member of the black community.

He was instead re-assigned to a menial job of hall porter at the post office, which touched off a controversy in the fledgling black community.

At the post office, the all-white workers insulted and refused to give him a uniform, train or show him his mail route. "He showed up to work on the first day and they gave him a mop and pail," his great-grandson Jay recalled. "They wouldn't give him a uniform because they didn't think he represented the Canadian government."

He went on to deliver mail in the Annex area of Toronto for more than 30-years. He died in 1918.

We also salute the work of U.S. army Lt. Col. Charity Edna Earley, the first Black woman to command the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion in Europe during World War II. The all-black battalion of 855 women was tasked with delivering mail to Americans stationed in Europe.

Their motto was "No mail, no morale." The job was monumental. When they arrived in England, the Battle of the Bulge had disrupted mail deliveries to thousands of GIs, and three giant airplane hangars were packed full of undelivered mail, according to news reports.



WHO ARE "THE VOICE"?

The CUPW Voice is published monthly by the Toronto Local to keep our members informed of the latest issues affecting them. The CUPW Voice Advisory Committee is made up of: Layout artist Darren Kelly, Union activist Mark Brown, Secretary Treasurer Abdi Hagi Yusuf and Editor Tom Godfrey. We are always looking for new members to help with the publication. You can send Tom an e-mail with news items or tips at tgodfrey@rogers.com.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations go out to our CUPW Brothers and Sisters who celebrated Tamil Heritage Month, which is recognized yearly during the month of January.

There were some events and the issuing of a beautiful commemorative poster, which was produced by the CUPW national office to mark the event.

The event gives the community and mainstream population an opportunity to recognize the tremendous contributions of Tamil Canadians to our nation's social, economic, political and cultural fabric, organizers said.

"Tamil Canadians have played and continue to play an inspirational and vital role in communities across Canada," according to the poster.

There are more than 200,000 people of Tamil descent in Canada and it is the 16th most spoken immigrant language in Canada.

