



## BIG 3 BARGAINING

HEU members working for Sodexo, Aramark and Compass are building community-wide support for a living wage in the lead up to contract talks this fall.

p 3

# GUARDIAN



THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION • SUMMER 2008 • VOLUME 26 NUMBER 2



p 5

# LOST IN THE SHUFFLE

Seniors lose out in drive to privatize





## JUST SHUT UP

Opposition to the Gordon Campbell government's election gag law included a massive online letter-writing campaign and protests like this one outside the constituency office of the Premier.

Its plan to restrict third-party election advertising for five months before the next election was shortened to three months in the face of mounting opposition.

In June, HEU and several other unions retained a legal team to challenge the validity of the law in court.

Find out more at [www.justshutupbc.com](http://www.justshutupbc.com).

OLIVE DEMPSEY PHOTO

# Democracy hits the wall: legislature shuts down with gag law in place

With less than a year to go before British Columbians cast their votes in a provincial election, the B.C. Liberal government has taken steps to limit democratic debate both inside and outside the legislature.

They closed the spring session of the legislature on May 30 by using their majority to invoke "closure" and pass a flurry of controversial laws with virtually no debate or discussion.

Those include legislation to enact B.C.'s *Trade Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement* (TILMA) with Alberta. TILMA gives private corporations the right to challenge programs and services brought in by health authorities, municipalities and school boards if they think their profits will be affected.

The BC Liberals also rammed through *Bill 21*, enshrining "sustainability" as a principle of the province's health care system. Medicare advocates say the law will be used to justify future service cuts, user-fees and even private health insurance.

Other bills rushed through the legislature impact personal health information and put in place the controversial carbon tax.

But not content to squash debate and discussion in the legislature itself, the

Campbell Liberals also made sweeping changes to B.C.'s election laws that will impose severe restrictions on free speech in the months leading up to next year's provincial election.

The new gag law limits spending by third parties on advertising for a full three months before the election to just \$150,000. That's the cost of a couple of minutes of TV ads a month.

Remember HEU's TV ads and billboards during the 2005 election? They raised awareness about bed cuts and facility closures by running a list of affected facilities in front of a rural highway and slowly fading hospital sign.

That campaign cost more than \$500,000 just in the 28-day period before the 2005 election. Under the Campbell Liberals' gag law, it would have been illegal, and the union would have been fined.

And it gets worse. The new election rules define advertising so broadly that virtually any advertising message – election-related or not – would be subject to the new spending limits. It'll make it more difficult to speak out on issues ranging from collective bargaining to childcare to the environment.

For three months before the next election, the only voices that may be heard will be political parties. And since the new laws do nothing to restrict donations to political parties, the BC Liberals will be able to rely on huge corporate donations to outspend the Opposition NDP on expensive TV ads.

Other changes to the election law also make it more difficult for the homeless to vote, by tightening ID requirements at the polls.

Taken together, the closing weeks of this legislative session revealed a government willing to sacrifice open and democratic debate to further their agenda at any cost.

It also exposed government's vulnerability to public criticism as well as its unwillingness to engage in meaningful, evidence-based dialogue about the issues that are so critical to all British Columbians.

The BC Liberals also rammed through *Bill 21*, which enshrines "sustainability" as a principle of B.C.'s health care system.



JUDY DARCY

## Bed closures just don't make sense

No matter how you look at it, closing 350 public long-term care beds on Vancouver Island doesn't make sense.

It doesn't make sense for the growing numbers of seniors who are languishing on waitlists because there aren't enough beds available to them. It doesn't make sense to hand pink

slips to hundreds of experienced, skilled staff while health care is facing huge retention and recruitment challenges. And it certainly doesn't make sense to systematically eliminate our not-for-profit care homes, and replace them with privately-owned and operated facilities.

**No amount of double-speak will let this government off the hook for what's happening to seniors' care when it faces voters next May.**

In response to rising opposition in communities from Parksville to Duncan to Victoria, the Vancouver Island Health Authority's justifications and excuses are meeting with outrage and scorn. People know they are losing badly-needed beds so that private operators can open for business.

Cowichan Lodge – which is slated for total closure – is a case in point. Recently, I had the privilege of seeing first-hand the real tragedy at the core of VIHA's decision to shut down the 27-year-old facility.

From the moment I walked into the Lodge, and everywhere I went, I was in an environment that

breathed love, compassion, caring and above all else, community.

It's little wonder local papers have been filled with letters. Or that public meetings have been packed by hundreds of people who are appalled that a home that means so much to so many could be sacrificed to the government's privatization agenda.

The sad fact is, what Cowichan Lodge has built can't be replaced by the new, private facility where most of the home's 94 seniors will be transferred.

That's because you can't buy spirit. It comes from the community itself – the families, the staff, the volunteers, and the scores of citizens who say this was the place they wanted to spend their final years.

These are the people who cannot fathom why anyone would take a modern, homey residence that sits on acres of beautiful gardens and dispose of it. Who, they ask, takes a 27-year-old house and tears it down because a roof leaks or a larger doorway is needed?

The Campbell Liberals need to beware. And HEU members need to be aware. Island communities are revealing a power that's ready to be tapped into when entire communities come together to defend their public care homes and the people who staff them.

No amount of double-speak will let this government off the hook for what's happening to seniors' care when it faces voters next May.

## voice.mail

### Home closes after seven-year ordeal

As of July 12, the last of 32 residents of an 80-bed facility – Kelly Care Centre in Summerland (formally known as Parkdale Place) – were transferred to their new homes in other facilities within the Interior Health Authority.

For our members and residents alike, this journey has been a seven-year ordeal that began with the first announcement of our future closure on April 1, 2001.

Over this period of time, we have experienced a slow, heart-wrenching decline in residents and staff. The last two years have seen our 'home' become a 'first available bed' transition facility for 32-35 residents, with minimal staffing.

The final round of displacements included the elimination of 26 full-time and part-time positions.

I would like to acknowl-

edge all the members of our local for their many years of service as well as those who have chosen retirement: Barbara Paulsen (cook, 25 years); Margaret Longmire (support services, 22 years); Dale Brown (LPN, 20 years); Carol Doyle (support services, 18 years); Adelle Cuillerier (care aide, 15 years) and myself, Linda Sherwood (care aide, 27 years).

Thank you for including our story in the *Guardian*.

**LINDA SHERWOOD**  
Chairperson

HEU Parkdale-CUPE 6299

### Port Alberni fights funding cuts

Seniors' care in Port Alberni is in crisis. Fir Park and Echo Village, long-term care facilities in our community, have been struggling to maintain standards of quality care for all residents despite VIHA's failure to provide adequate funding.

This year, VIHA has cut \$80,000 from Echo Village's operating budget, which means our Special Care Unit, known as the "Pink Wing", will be closed.

The only reason it remained operational for the past 16 years was because dollars were pulled from other areas to provide for the necessary higher level of staffing. But contingency funds and other

reserves have been depleted – the money has run out.

As a result, some of our residents will have to be relocated outside of the Alberni Valley. All of this comes at a time when VIHA has already closed the psychiatric ward at West Coast General Hospital, which has greatly reduced mental health services in our community.

Without adequate funding, our management has also deemed it necessary to reduce staffing in both facilities just to remain solvent. Reduced staffing translates into a reduction of direct care and services to our resident population. Some members will lose their jobs, outright, while others will see their hours reduced.

As a staff and as a community, we had to fight back! On June 24, the members of Fir Park/Echo local, with the support of management and many community organizations, held a Town Hall meeting where 800 people gathered to protest the cuts. VIHA was invited to send representatives, as was George Abbott, Minister of Health. VIHA declined and the government didn't respond!

Sadly, our actions did not result in the immediate restoration of funding. However, we are not discouraged. We are circulating a petition which we hope to have presented in the legislature at the fall sitting and we are looking at other ways to keep the spotlight on the issue. After all,

Port Alberni is known as "The Community with a Heart".

**NANCY CZIGANY**  
Fir Park/Echo local

### Lodge creates sense of belonging

Cowichan Lodge has been a life-saver for my husband and me. I cannot believe the health authority wants to close it down.

I remember the day when I finally had to admit the truth: very serious dementia had joined our marriage. I watched loss after loss – the driver's license, his ability to speak, his willingness to take medication. I could not leave Geza alone anymore.

The time came when I could no longer cope. The social worker said, "That's it! We cannot afford to have both of you in a home." Geza would go into care. It was the hardest thing I ever did. I felt that I was deserting him and burying him alive.

The first facility was the wrong place for Geza. He constantly escaped and had to be dragged back while screaming and fighting. The nurses were very kind, but helpless.

Finally, Geza was admitted to Cowichan Lodge, where his fear slowly dissolved and he felt loved and had a great sense of belonging. This includes me, too.

Geza's mind might be very limited, but his emotional life remains intact. He and I are still very connected on an

emotional level.

The language of love knows no barrier, and the staff at Cowichan Lodge provide it plentifully.

**ELLI BORAY**  
family member, Cowichan Lodge

### Solidarity counts

I'm a care aide working at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital for the past 21 years. I attended my first HEU meeting in 1987, and have rarely missed one since.

When the Living Wage Campaign came along, I was interested in getting involved, as I wanted to support HEU members employed by Compass. And I was honoured when Compass members voted for me during a LWC workshop in Nanaimo to be part of the campaign's working group.

My role in this committee is to work with and guide members to have the courage to speak up for what they believe in – better working conditions and fair wages. I've given public talks on how these members are treated and their struggles.

I have also seen these new members grow and find their voices. I am thrilled when they invite me to their general meetings and feel like I am part of them. We are all brothers and sisters in this union, and we should work together for the betterment and strength of all.

**BETTY AVAIKI**  
care aide, Nanaimo local







Bill 26 brings provincial law into compliance with Supreme Court ruling • 3

Vancouver Women's Health Collective creates viable social enterprise • 7

HEU's first women's conference identifies barriers and how to overcome them • 8

In-house trades and maintenance staff: a collective knowledge money can't buy • 10

Labour movement addresses climate change crisis • 11

## Collective bargaining rights restored

It took more than six years, and a ruling from Canada's highest court, for B.C.'s Liberal government to correct a law that should never have been forced through the provincial legislature in the first place.

But in May, government brought *Bill 29 – the Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement Act (2002)* into compliance with last year's landmark Supreme Court of Canada decision that ruled key sections of the act unconstitutional.

As a result of amending legislation (*Bill 26*) that was debated and passed in May, health care and community social services workers will no longer be prohibited, by law, from negotiating contracting-out language at the bargaining table. The legislation also amended *Bill 94 – the Health Sector Partnerships Agreement Act (2003)* by removing provisions that are similar to the unconstitutional sections of *Bill 29*.

*Bill 94* affects many health care public-private partnerships and their subcontractors.

While there was no admission from the Premier, or anyone else on the Liberal benches, that their 2002 legislation had seriously violated health care workers' bargaining rights – much less an apology – Opposition NDP MLAs stood up in the legislature and took the government to task over the impact *Bill 29* has had on health care workers and health services.

For the record, here's what some of them had to say:

**Adrian Dix** (Vancouver-Kingway and Opposition health critic)

"The legislation we're dealing with today, *Bill 26*, deals with a bill that was passed on January 28, 2002, a bill that was an attack not just on the bargaining rights but on the livelihood of a group of health care workers... that group of workers was betrayed. They were betrayed by this government with incalculable damage to their lives and to our communities... when you consider the impact of it, the largest layoff of female workers in Canadian history, the violation of their freedom-of-association rights... I think an apology is owed."

**Norm MacDonald** (Columbia River-Revelstoke):

"The attack on health care workers was part of a bigger program.

The mismanaging of the public interest was there primarily to serve a very narrow corporate interest, and you see it. You see the companies that donated, the companies that are connected to this government, which have benefited from these sorts of programs... Time and time again, this government chooses a very narrow corporate interest and puts that ahead of the wider public interest."

**Raj Chouhan** (Burnaby-Edmonds).

"It's a great day for me to stand up and tell this government and the members on that side how wrong they were in passing *Bill 29*... I think the best thing this government can do is all stand up and say, 'We are sorry,' and apologize. I expect the Premier to stand up himself and say sorry and apologize. That's the only way you can send a positive message to those health care workers whose jobs were taken away, whose lives were destroyed."

**Chuck Puchmayr** (New Westminster)

"To literally shred, tear up collective agreements and throw into turmoil the lives of 8,000 to 10,000 health care professionals... It was just an absolute shock that rippled not only through this province but through this country and all the way to Geneva, to the United Nations and the International Labour Organization. This legislation goes a small way towards rectifying [*Bill 29*], but it certainly doesn't put back all the pieces of the puzzle or the



HEU representatives were in the B.C. legislature on April 14 to witness the introduction of new legislation that brings provincial laws into compliance with last June's Supreme Court of Canada ruling on *Bill 29*.

broken dreams of the people who were working in that field."

**David Chudnovsky** (Vancouver-Kensington)

"In my constituency in East Vancouver, in Vancouver-Kensington, 1,100 health care workers live... They report what really goes on in the hospitals. They report, most depressingly, that their feeling about their work has changed substantially over the last few years... The responsibility for that lies with this government, because when you treat people without respect and you fail to provide to them the dignity to which they're entitled, there are consequences. The consequences are that the morale in our hospitals has taken a tremendous beating."

**Maurine Karagianis** (Esquimalt-Metchosin)

"I see many of those workers, and some of them have got other jobs. Some of them are just barely scraping by. Some of them left the health care sector entirely and have gone to do other things. None of them anticipated that this destruction of their lives would happen at the hands of their very own government, a government they trusted; a government that promised them, leading into the election in 2001, that there would be no broken contracts, that all of their rights would be respected, that their contracts would be respected."

## Thousands of applications for redress now in process



Boxes of applications for compensation, from members who were impacted by *Bill 29*, line the hallways of HEU's Provincial Office. A team of workers is reviewing the more than 6,000 applications received by the June 30 deadline. Where necessary, they are contacting individuals for more information before sending their claims to the Health Employers Association of B.C.

A joint union-employer committee, assisted by Vince Ready, will determine if a potential claimant is eligible for a payment, and the amount of money individuals who qualify for redress will receive. Final decisions and cheque distribution will occur before the end of the year.

The \$68 million compensation package is part of a larger settlement agreement reached between the provincial government, HEABC and the

Facilities Bargaining Association earlier this year. The agreement, also provides for re-training funds and expanded bargaining rights, including the right to negotiate on issues like contracting out.





## COFFEE BREAK

### Safe fun in the sun

Knowing how harmful sun exposure can be – about one million people are diagnosed with skin cancer every year – here are some tips to help you reduce your risks while still having fun in the sun:

Try to avoid direct, midday sun exposure. According to Health Canada, ultraviolet rays are at their peak between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m..

Wear sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 25 (this protects from both UVA and UVB rays). At minimum, use one with an SPF of 15. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors, and repeat regularly throughout the day, particularly if you are swimming. Waterproof or water-resistant sunscreen is available in lotions, sprays and gels.

Take cover in the shade if you're outdoors for a long period of time. Trees, tents and umbrellas provide decent shade, and may also protect you from sunstroke (heatstroke).

Wear a wide-brimmed sun hat to shade your face, lips, ears, head and neck – areas that are particularly vulnerable to burns and skin cancer. Be sure to apply sunscreen to exposed skin if you wear a baseball cap, as it only shields your face.

Wrap-around sunglasses that block UVA and UVB rays are the best protection for your eyes, and decrease the risk of cataracts.

Ultraviolet rays can seep through clouds and some clothing. For extra protection, wear sunscreen even under your clothes. And remember, you can also get sunburned on overcast days.

Drink lots of water to stay hydrated and avoid strenuous exercise on hot days. Dehydration and over-exercising can lead to sunstroke.

Sources: CALM, FitSugar, Home Magazine, Health Canada



## HEU Sodexo cleaners move to new Abbotsford hospital

Sodexo-employed housekeepers currently working at MSA Hospital will remain members of the Hospital Employees' Union under a transfer agreement that provides them with the option to move – alongside HEU MSA facilities members – to the new Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre (ARHCC).

The Memorandum of Agreement, reached early in June with the assis-

tance of mediator Vince Ready, means members will be able to move to the new facility with their seniority, service and benefits intact and apply for other Sodexo jobs at the facility. If they choose not to transfer and receive lay-off notice, they will receive severance pay.

HEU will represent all Sodexo workers at ARHCC including housekeeping, food services, portering and reception. Once the hospital is open, all HEU

Sodexo members will be able to vote on the terms of a collective agreement.

The HEU cleaners, accompanied by union staff representatives, will be meeting with Sodexo throughout July to go over their employment and lay-off options. They will also tour the new facility.

The Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre is scheduled to open August 24.

## Know your rights

# What you need to know about EIP

**T**he Early Intervention Program (EIP) was negotiated in a Memorandum of Agreement between the Facilities Bargaining Association and the Health Employers Association of B.C. in 2006 bargaining. Administered by Health Benefit Trust, and available to regular employees, the program provides early medical intervention to help ill or injured workers regain their health and return to work safely.

### Is the program voluntary?

The program is voluntary and you cannot be disciplined by your employer if you choose not to participate.

You are encouraged to self-refer to EIP without waiting for your employer, as it may speed up the process. Your employer does not have access to your confidential medical records, but will be provided with information on any restrictions, functional capabilities or limitations if you enter a graduated-return-to-work (GRTW) program or require accommodation.

### How do I get involved?

If you've missed six consecutive shifts, your employer should refer you to EIP or you can call the EIP repre-

sentative at HBT (Vancouver 604-630-1456; Victoria 250-479-4089, toll-free 1-888-630-1456). You'll receive an information package, which includes an authorization and medical form (to be completed by your physician). There are tight deadlines on returning these forms, and you'll most likely get reminder letters and phone calls from EIP as well as HEU's EIP representative.

### What benefits do I get from EIP?

Early Intervention is a program to pay for and coordinate medical assistance and services to help members in their recovery and safe return to work. This may include costs for doctor-approved treatments like massage and physiotherapy beyond what's covered by your extended health plan, as well as psychological counseling, and substance abuse counseling or treatment. EIP also pays for the completion of your medical form; doctors should invoice HBT directly – not you – for payment.

### What does EIP not provide?

EIP does not cover wage loss benefits or medication costs. It's not a replacement for sick time at your facility. If you run out of sick time, you can apply for medical employment insurance.

### What happens if I'm not ready to return to work?

EIP is not early return, but rather early intervention. No employee is expected to return to work before getting medical clearance from a physician. The goal of early intervention is to assist injured or ill members at the onset of symptoms. EIP is available during the first five months that you're off work. It's a good safeguard to apply for LTD after three months (even if you're on medical EI) in case you are going to be off work longer than anticipated.

### What happens if I don't access EIP?

Participating in the program is voluntary. However, not participating may have unintended consequences, such as delay or denial of LTD claims due to incomplete or inadequate medical. Not all absences require EIP assistance – some injuries, surgeries or illness do not require rehabilitation treatment or modified return-to-work. Talking to your union EIP representative can help you make an informed decision.

Contact HEU's EIP representative Lois MacDonald at 604-456-7105 or toll-free 1-800-663-5813, ext. 7105, or email <lmacdonald@heu.org>.

## <<newsbites>>

### New Zealand changes course on privatization

Fifteen years after privatizing key public services, New Zealand has renationalized the country's rail and ferry systems.

Finance Minister Michael Cullen says, "The selling of our public rail system in the early 1990s, and the running down of the asset afterward, has been a painful lesson for New Zealand."

The Labour government stepped in after recognizing that private corporations would not be able to meet the country's need for a modern, sustainable transportation network.

"With rising fuel prices and growing awareness about the challenge of glob-

al climate change," explained Prime Minister Helen Clark, "many nations are looking to rail as a central part of 21st-century economic infrastructure."

Clark added that a publicly-owned modern rail system will allow the government to tackle climate change priorities by reducing emissions of the overall transport network, taking pressure off roads, and allow trucking and shipping to operate more efficiently.

### Dockworkers say "no" to Iraq war

Thousands of dock workers along the West Coast of the U.S. shut down some 29 ports in May for an entire eight-hour shift in protest against the war in Iraq.

The work stoppage kept nearly 10,000 containers from being loaded or unloaded from about 30 cargo ships from Seattle to San Diego.

The statement from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) said, "We are loyal to America, but we won't stand by while our country, our troops and our economy are being destroyed by a war that's bankrupting us to the tune of \$3 trillion."

(Guild Reporter/CWA/CALM)

### Yukon rejects TILMA

The growing number of organizations and municipalities opposing TILMA (Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement) won a huge victory in June

# Island mobilizes to protect seniors' care

A firestorm of opposition has erupted in Island communities where seniors, families, care staff and concerned citizens have joined forces to protest the imminent closure of hundreds of public long-term care beds – including the total shutdown of Duncan's Cowichan Lodge.

Rallies, community meetings, and an outpouring of media attention have taken the Vancouver Island Health Authority to task for its surprise announcement on June 20 that 350 long-term care beds are on the chopping block. They will be replaced by new beds that are owned and operated by private, for-profit facilities.

And despite a range of excuses from both VIHA authorities and B.C.'s Health Minister George Abbott, the public isn't buying them.

Neither are the more than 250 HEU members who stand to lose their jobs over the summer as a result of the planned closures. Members affected include care aides, LPNs, activity aides, rehab assistants, unit clerks, housekeepers, dietary staff and laundry workers.

HEU's secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says health care workers were completely blindsided by VIHA's sudden announcement in what she



About 800 seniors, family members, care staff and concerned citizens packed a Port Alberni Town Hall meeting at the end of June. They signed petitions and passed a resolution demanding the provincial government and its health authority provide the funding required to retain safe, secure, quality care at Fir Park and Echo Village.

calls "an extremely disrespectful and short-sighted move" that will fuel the growing recruitment and retention crisis throughout health care.

"In Duncan, staff were informed of their facility's impending closure the day after the new, for-profit facility in that community closed its employment application process," she says. "If that doesn't send a message about how little value the health authority puts on the skills and experience of these dedicated workers, nothing does."

The timing of the announcement to close Cowichan Lodge – built 27

years ago – has also been criticized for its failure to provide the 12-month notice required under the *Continuing Care and Licensing Act* to legally shut down a residential care home.

"How can the public be confident in the laws safeguarding seniors' care when this health authority didn't respect the regulations, and when called on it, wrote itself an exemption?" questions Darcy. "They are the body that's responsible for enforcing these regulations."

She says the notice provision exists to prevent sudden and unnecessary upheavals in the lives of long-term care residents and their families. "You'd think VIHA would live up to their own standards."

Since the closure was announced, family members of Lodge residents have been extremely vocal about the negative impact the upcoming move could have on their loved ones' health.

"Frankly, maintaining the continuity of care and minimizing the disruption to residents' lives should have been the health authority's first priority," says Darcy. "Instead, seniors and their families were completely ambushed by the health authority."

The union has called on VIHA to reverse its closure plans in light of the fact that B.C. has the lowest number of residential care beds in the coun-

**"As long as frail seniors who require 24-hour residential care continue to wait at home, or in a hospital or at a facility, none of these beds should be closed."**

try. The latest figures from Statistics Canada (2005-2006) show there are only 36.5 beds for every thousand seniors in B.C. compared to a national average of 47.1.

Darcy says closing beds makes no sense in the face of the current shortages. "As long as frail seniors who require 24-hour residential care continue to wait

at home, or in a hospital or at a facility, none of these beds should be closed."

VIHA's bed closure plan is not the only issue sparking protest on the Island. In Port Alberni, close to 800 people packed a Town Hall meeting on June 24 demanding the health authority provide the funding needed to maintain a 16-bed secure unit – known as the Pink Wing – for Fir Park and Echo Village residents.

The meeting attendees were told that the future ability of the two public facilities to continue providing a high level of safe, secure, quality care is in serious jeopardy. Lack of funding will not only close the Pink Wing, but force cuts in the hours of care available to all residents at Fir Park and Echo Village.

PATTY GIBSON

## Transfers cause trauma

THE HARMFUL PHYSICAL and psychological effects caused by relocating residents in long-term care – particularly the frail elderly – are now well-known. Based on 40 years of documentation and observation, Relocation Stress Syndrome was first recognized as an official nursing diagnosis in 1992.

Studies examining the effect of transferring different patient groups between institutions have found that transferred patients are at an elevated mortality risk between 1.99 and 3.76 times greater than those who are not transferred.

The *U.S. Administration on Aging's Emergency Preparedness Manual* says "sudden and unexpected relocation can result in inadequate information about individual medical needs. In addition,

the psychological tasks associated with adjusting to new surroundings and routines can lead to depression, increased irritability, serious illness and even death in the frail elderly."

Several American states, most notably California, have taken steps to protect seniors from transfer trauma by requiring facilities and health authorities take certain measures when relocating individuals from one facility to another. The *California Bill of Rights* for nursing home residents, for example, has provisions designed to minimize potential trauma when the frail elderly are moved. Measures include medical assessments of residents, assessment of the relocation needs, adequate notice, and the filing of a relocation plan prior to any transfer.

controversial agreement.

A legal opinion, commissioned by CUPE in May, warns that TILMA's ability to impose financial and other sanctions on public bodies is a violation of the Canadian Constitution.

"TILMA as we know it in Alberta and B.C. should sound the alarm in other regions of Canada, like Ontario and Quebec, that are currently considering similar inter-provincial agreements," says CUPE National president Paul Moist.

"When governments consult on TILMA and look at it without ideological blinkers on, they reject it," he says.

The deal comes into effect in B.C. and Alberta on April 1, 2009.

## Ban on agricultural workers' right to unionize appealed

The rights of Ontario's more than 100,000 agricultural workers were front and centre in an appeal filed by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Canada and heard by Ontario's Court of Appeal in late May.

The application was brought on behalf of three Ontario agricultural workers who worked at the Rol-Land Farms mushroom grow house in Kingsville, Ontario who in 2003, along with a majority of the workers at Rol-Land, had voted to form a UFCW Canada unit.

The certificate was never issued because under Ontario's *Agricultural Employees Protection Act (AEPA)*, agri-

cultural workers are excluded from forming unions to bargain collectively.

That exclusion, the appeal argued, is a breach of Ontario agriculture workers' constitutional rights. The appeal argument was reinforced by the Supreme Court of Canada's landmark decision in June 2007 which extended freedom of association rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to include the right to collective bargaining.

"Agriculture workers deserve the same rights as any other worker," says Wayne Hanley, the national president of UFCW Canada.

"Last June's ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada made it very clear that union activity and collective bargaining



# Working miracles everyday

## Report supports expanded LPN, care aide utilization

One of the most promising initiatives to emerge from the union's 2006 policy table discussions with the Ministry of Health and the Health Employers Association of B.C. is a thorough and strategic examination of how managers can better utilize health

care's nursing team members.

The first report from the joint policy table – *Effectively Utilizing B.C.'s Licensed Practical Nurses and Care Aides: Case Studies* – has just been released and is available on HEU's website <[www.heu.org](http://www.heu.org)>. It underscores the important contribution LPNs and care aides make within the care team; identifies work sites where collaborative practices, expanded roles, effective utilization and training opportunities have been introduced, and looks at ways to overcome obstacles that still exist in some areas.

The report includes seven recommendations on how to support care aides and LPNs in the workplace, such as providing transition to practice opportunities for new graduate LPNs; professional development, educational and networking opportunities; leadership training, and collaborative practice opportunities to assist LPNs and care aides' participation on clinical practice issues.

These recommendations – endorsed by B.C.'s Chief Nursing Officers – are in the process of being implemented at the province's six health authorities.

The joint planning committee will release a follow-up report in December 2009 evaluating the progress made by the health authorities in implementing the recommendations.

"Step by step, these types of initiatives are bringing about huge improvements in health care delivery," says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy. "It's very encouraging for all our nursing team members to see how these pockets of creativity are leading the way to greater collaboration, recognition and support for their skills and abilities."



FRED MUZIN

### PRESIDENT'S DESK

## HEU: a powerful force at local level

This year, HEU members have an opportunity to improve their communities and make significant changes in the quality of their lives.

On November 15, B.C. will hold municipal elections for city councils, school and park

boards. Although our main focus is usually on the provincial election – since health care is administered by the province – consider the power local politicians have over your daily life, and take the time to get involved.

City councils are responsible for critical services including the provision of water, sewage, garbage removal and recycling programs, road and lighting maintenance, policing, firefighting, homelessness and social housing, ethical purchasing, zoning (both density and types) for residences and businesses, taxes, transit fares, infrastructure, libraries, environmentally-friendly initiatives, and more.

Park boards determine the amount of green space in our municipalities (the number and location) as well as the services provided in our parks and community centres. These include beaches, tennis courts, food services, swimming pools and ice rinks.

School board trustees oversee educational curriculum and content, the provision of nutritious food, child care, physical education programs, arts and culture offerings, equity programs and class sizes.

The front-line folks who provide the services that create and maintain our livable communities are CUPE members. Just like us, they understand the value of quality public services and are committed to their communities.

Look at what happened in Vancouver last summer when Mayor Sam Sullivan's determination to contract out services caused a long, arduous strike with an unnecessary disruption of services.

There are so many ways we can work together to make a difference in the lives of our families, friends and neighbours. Consider some of these examples where municipalities are taking a stand on issues important to all of us.

Many councils have passed resolutions opposing TILMA, the *Trade and Investment Labour Mobility Agreement*, which would create impediments to supporting local businesses and local hiring policies, fair wages and citizens' control.

School boards in Burnaby and Nanaimo have endorsed HEU's Living Wage Campaign, and others are considering the same.

Twenty councils designated March as Community Social Services month.

In the 2002 elections, 160 of 284 (56 per cent) of labour-endorsed candidates were successful. In 2005, 163 of 277 (59 per cent) were elected.

Traditionally, voter turnout for municipal elections is extremely low. With 43,000 members, living in every part of B.C., our union can have a huge impact at the local level. When we help others, we also help ourselves.

**Just like us, other CUPE members understand the value of quality public services and are committed to their communities.**

## Opportunities for training available

MANY NURSING TEAM MEMBERS have taken advantage of the \$5 million FBA Education Fund – negotiated in 2006 bargaining – to assist health care workers in skills upgrading or taking programs to move into other job classifications within the bargaining unit.

To date, about 350 care aides and licensed practical nurses have benefited from the fund's training opportunities

Funding is still available for part-time or full-time studies, and includes skills enhancement or pre-requisite courses, and occupational upgrades.

So far, nearly 200 residential care aides have taken the Licensed Practical Nurse, RCA, and Access to LPN programs; LPN pre-requisites; as well as upgrades like Activity Assistant, and Acute Care Skills. And about 150 LPNs have completed Essential Leadership Skills, Heightened Expectations – Acute, and Immunization Theory for LPNs (self-study), and refresher courses.

For more information on the FBA Education Fund, check the HEU website ([www.heu.org](http://www.heu.org)) or contact Mary Waddington, FBA Education Fund Coordinator, at 604-456-7137 or toll-free 1-800-663-5813, extension 7137.

## <<newsbites>>

are rights, not an option to be granted or denied by the government," he says.

The decision from the Court of Appeal for Ontario is expected sometime before September.

### CLC's action plan on rising energy costs

The Canadian Labour Congress has released a seven-point action plan to deal with the impact of soaring energy costs. Acknowledging that higher oil and gas prices may be helping Canada to move to a more energy-efficient economy, the Congress says a plan is need-

ed to safeguard jobs and living standards in the transition.

First, governments must take a cue from the destructive collapse of the "dot com" bubble in 2000, and the recent collapse of the U.S. sub-prime housing bubble, by reigning in global speculators. Low-interest rates need to be maintained and surplus oil company profits should be taxed. Revenues from higher taxes should be used to finance immediate increases in tax credits for lower and middle-income households.

To reduce oil consumption, governments must expand

the capacity of the country's public transit systems and support the development of highly energy efficient Made in Canada vehicles and appliances, so that adjustment to higher prices creates jobs.

The Congress also wants the National Energy Board to approve oil and gas exports to the United States, only if Canada's longer-term needs can be met. The plan also calls for the re-establishment of the pipeline capacity needed to bring Western Canadian oil to central Canadian markets in order to reduce Canada's dependence

on imported oil.

And finally, the Congress says that rather than impose even higher energy prices on working families through a carbon tax, the immediate focus of climate change policies should be to reduce the emissions of the "large final emitters", especially the energy intensive tar sands and coal-fired power plants.

Regulations capping emissions are needed, it says, to force investment in new technologies. Revenues from selling emission permits can then be directed to help industry adjust and cushion lower-income

households against price increases. The Congress also says further tar sands expansion should not take place unless the industry can reduce its total emissions by investing in carbon capture and storage. For more information, visit <[www.canadianlabour.ca](http://www.canadianlabour.ca)>.

### UK survey finds food waste staggering

A recent survey in England and Wales shows people are needlessly throwing away 3.6 million tons of food each year.

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) found that salad, fruit and

# Rx: Prescription for a women's pharmacy

Steps away from Pigeon Park in **Vancouver's Downtown Eastside**, and a block over from the trend-setting Woodward's housing development, sits **a dark, empty store**. As much as the neighbourhood is undergoing a transformation, so is this small piece of real estate.

In a couple of months, 29 West Hastings will be the new home of the Vancouver Women's Health Collective and its most ambitious project – a women-only pharmacy. Lu's: A Pharmacy for Women is the product of an idea that took root in 2006. VWHC executive director Caryn Duncan had been looking for ways to stabilize the health collective's funding base in the wake of severe cuts to women's centres and services made by the Campbell Liberal government since 2002.

"Re-thinking our financial base was motivated by a thirst for survival," says Duncan. "We had lost our provincial and health authority funding, then our city funding. We were confronting the reality of our financial stability.

"I constantly had my feelers out looking for possibilities. As I started to talk to women, I began to realize that pharmacies in the Downtown Eastside were not meeting their needs," Duncan explains.

"There was a glaring need for a respectful pharmacy dedicated to women. I stumbled on the idea of a social enterprise," she says.

According to the New Orleans-based Social Enterprise Organization, the definition of a social enterprise is an organization or venture that advances its social mission through entrepreneurial earned income strategies.

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective – a 35-year-old, feminist, health, non-governmental organization (NGO) that is both a health information and services resource and an advocacy group – is a fierce

proponent of our universal health care system, a hard fought-for system that has improved the health of Canadian women for more than four decades.

After much research, the operation of a pharmacy emerged as a viable social enterprise for the health collective because: running a pharmacy would not violate the *Canada Health Act*; and such a venture would hold true to the organization's mission statement to "value women's knowledge, support one another to take charge of our own health, and raise awareness and inspire actions for the feminist advancement of women's health."

Duncan presented the social venture/pharmacy concept to the VWHC steering committee in April 2006. Two years, and many steps later, the pharmacy is scheduled to open in September.

Steering committee member Beth Pentney says that seeing the process unfold has been her biggest reward to date. "From an idea brewing in the minds of a few, to seeing two years of work become material, is exciting."

And the biggest challenge? "Convincing the cautious that an

NGO, a feminist women's health collective, can run a small business," she says.

Duncan backs that up. "We approached it as we do any initiative: get informed, get involved, help women to help themselves. It never crossed my mind that the VWHC didn't have the moxy or the credentials to run a pharmacy."

One of the most obvious successes is the broad support Lu's has attracted. Both Pentney and Duncan applaud the many individuals and the institutions



Scale model for Lu's: A Pharmacy for Women

that have backed the women's pharmacy. The list is long and includes Atira, Potluck, Vancity, B.C. Social Enterprise Fund, Central City Foundation, Building Opportunities with Business, the UBC School of Architecture – and the Hospital Employees' Union.

HEU has been in on the project since 2006, believing in its value and its viability.

"It's a natural extension of the union's community and coalition work," says HEU's financial secretary Donisa Bernardo, who previously worked at Royal

**Lu's is innovative, progressive and empowering to women. HEU is proud to be involved.**

Inland Hospital as a pharmacy technician. "We have worked alongside the Vancouver Women's Health Collective at the BC Health Coalition, on International Women's Day events and more. We know and understand their contributions to women, especially those who are the most marginalized in our society.

"Lu's is exactly right for the VWHC – innovative, progressive and empowering to women. HEU is proud to be involved," says Bernardo.

As with many projects, there's a lot to do in the final months before opening. There's the promotion, the completion of site renovations, and the hiring of two female community pharmacists.

Duncan says that finding the pharmacists is her priority. It will be a challenge, but Duncan hopes to find two creative, adventurous women who are up to it.

"If we heard one message, it's that women of the Downtown Eastside want a women's pharmacy. That's exciting," says Duncan.

"A year from now, I really hope that women are using our pharmacy and health information services, that they find us helpful and a good addition to the neighbourhood. We want to thrive and survive!"

MARGI BLAMEY



Inge Roeker (left) of UBC's School of Architecture discusses the pharmacy's future design with Vancouver Health Collective executive director Caryn Duncan. Roeker and her students were instrumental in creating the pharmacy's architectural vision.

MARGI BLAMEY PHOTOS

bread were most commonly wasted and 60 per cent of all dumped food was untouched. Meat and fish also made up a large proportion of the food that was thrown out.

According to WRAP, 5,500 whole chickens were thrown away each day in the UK.

The *Food We Waste Survey* is the first of its kind in the world, surveying both household habits and the actual waste they throw away.

The survey interviewed



2,715 households and then, several weeks later, analyzed the rubbish of 2,138 of them.

WRAP's chief executive Liz Goodwin says food waste is an economic and social issue, and it has a significant environmental impact.

The UK's Environment Minister points out, "there are climate change costs to all of us from growing, processing, packaging, transporting, and refrigerating food that only ends up in the bin."

(BBC news Online)

## Seniors' forum creates blueprint for action

A campaign-planning forum, sponsored by the BC Health Coalition, in early May has created a blueprint for action on seniors' issues. More than 50 seniors' activists from across the province spent a day seeking solutions to the growing crisis in seniors' care.

The session was opened by Dr. Patricia Baird, chair of the Premier's Task Force on Aging and Seniors.

Baird said the Premier's council made several policy recommendations 18 months ago that have not been

implemented. She said seniors' issues are currently spread over 20 government departments, which is why a Minister of State for Seniors is needed.

Throughout the day, participants developed four key campaign demands: the appointment of an independent seniors' advocate; 5,000 new, not-for-profit, long-term care beds promised by the BC Liberals prior to their election in 2001; expanded home support and 3.5 hours per resident per day of direct nursing care in B.C.'s residential facilities.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Fall regional meetings

INTERIOR:  
September 10

VANCOUVER ISLAND:  
September 22

VANCOUVER COASTAL:  
September 29

FRASER: October 1

NORTHERN: October 7

Please check your local union bulletin board for times and locations, or visit the HEU website <www.heu.org>.





## HEU's first-ever women's conference encouraged participants to identify the barriers they face in their lives and in their union. They returned to their locals inspired, refreshed and ready to take action.

It was a gathering that was decades in the making. And despite the wide-ranging backgrounds and experiences among the 80 women who came together for HEU's first-ever women's conference, by the end of the two-day event, they'd forged a lot of common ground.

Organizers estimate that more than half of the delegates were first-time conference-goers. Many had never attended a union event before. Some had been HEU members for years, but had yet to become involved in their local union.

80 per cent women, Darcy put it this way: "It's very simple, really. In the year 2008, in Gordon Campbell's British Columbia, the women of HEU still don't have equality. We don't have economic equality, we don't have social equality and we don't have equality in our union. That's why we need a women's conference."

She reminded delegates that HEU had fought for decades for economic equality for women by bargaining higher wages for women at the bottom, fighting for and negotiating pay equity, and trying to eliminate the disparity in wages between the health facilities, community health and community social services sectors.

"We were on this long, forward-moving march to women's equality. And we'd made tremendous gains. But Campbell set us back, not just years, but decades," she said, adding that she had no doubt, "this conference is going to ensure that we once again put women's equality on the agenda, including the bargaining agenda in 2010."

Pointing out that B.C. now has the highest poverty rates in Canada, and for the last five years, has had the highest rate of child poverty in the country, Darcy said,

# SISTERS LOOKING TO THE

"When I look out across this room and see the marvelous women who are here from all occupational groups, all different employers and all parts of the province," exclaimed HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy in her opening remarks, "I feel pretty safe in predicting, sisters, that after this conference HEU will never be the same again."

Judging from the stacks of positive evaluations, the women who had arrived for the conference's opening on May 14, headed home the following afternoon on a very high note.

And they left wanting more. More opportunities to celebrate. More training from their union. And definitely, more women's conferences.

Under the theme "Sisters looking to the future", the jam-packed agenda included plenary and panel sessions, keynote speakers, skill-building workshops, and sessions on everything from storytelling to building women's bargaining power.

An evening of celebration at the end of the first day showcased a roster of talented musicians, comedians, drummers, and dancers that could rival any multicultural festival.

### WHY HOST A WOMEN'S CONFERENCE?

The impetus for a women's conference originated at HEU's 2006 biennial convention with a resolution that never made it to the plenary floor. Nonetheless, the union's Provincial Executive decided the idea for a leadership conference – aimed at encouraging women's participation at all levels of the union – was an important and long overdue priority.

As to why the union needs a women's conference when the union is

"It goes without saying that children are poor because their parents are poor, and most of those parents are women. Some of them are HEU members working for Sodexo, Compass and Aramark."

She said the BC Liberals simply aren't interested in the value of the work women do, because the only value they're concerned with is the value of the "market".

"Privatization is a women's issue and a women's equality issue," she declared. "Both because of the low-paid jobs that are created for women by privatization, and because public services, and public health care in particular, are the great equalizers in our society. Access doesn't depend on the kind of wages you bring home, they're equally available to everybody."

### BRINGING DOWN THE BARRIERS

Early on in the conference, delegates identified several barriers to women's participation in the union. They included workload, lack of time, self-esteem, sexism, the union's structures, language barriers, and low wages. In one of the final sessions, participants worked together in small groups to brainstorm solutions that could reduce or eliminate many of the roadblocks that limit women's involvement.

As one of the conference organizers quipped, "Women know what needs to be fixed. They just need to be asked."

Ideas included: changing the number of meetings members are required to attend in order to run for an elected office or to qualify for convention credentials; creating more funded educational opportunities, including "personal development" courses; publishing clear language fact sheets on major issues; designating the women's committee as an HEU standing committee; holding an annual women's conference, and making sure new delegates receive more training and mentoring before and during biennial conventions.

Delegates were encouraged to take their concerns back to their locals and develop resolutions for HEU's upcoming biennial convention that will help address some of those barriers.





**Keynote speaker Buffy Sainte-Marie encouraged women to trust their feminine skills, their feminine instincts, and to use their built-in survival skills.**

**“The power of ‘no’ and treasuring yourself are things you might want to think about. Don’t wait for validation or permission. Just go out and do it.”**

## SISTERHOOD AND SOLIDARITY

Throughout the conference, delegates also heard from several speakers including Barbara Halcrow, who talked about how women can create a greater balance at work, at home and in the union; NDP women’s critic Claire Trevena, young worker activist Tria Donaldson, and Canadian singer/songwriter and digital media artist Buffy Sainte-Marie.

A world-renowned performer and activist, Sainte-Marie’s powerful keynote address covered everything from First Nations history, to women’s sexuality and spirituality, to the warlord mentality that feeds on conflict, domination, and “looks for new ways to divide and conquer”.

She encouraged women to nurture themselves, develop and use their survival skills, learn from each other, and embrace the power of “the sacred feminine”.

“The sacred feminine is the thing in yourself that mothers you and allows you to mother someone else,” she said, adding that we need “more sisterhood, more solidarity.”

“This isn’t a matter of putting men down,” she said.

# FUTURE

“It’s about building yourself up. It’s not about being pretty or being correct, it’s about being effective.”

Sainte-Marie reminded her audience that in tribal life women typically worked together for the good of everyone. “Solidarity among women is a natural thing... it’s beautiful... Abandon the pecking order.”

HEU’s financial secretary Donisa Bernardo, who wrapped up the conference, encouraged delegates to take what they’ve learned from each other over the two days, and bring it to their locals and their co-workers.

And she told participants that, in the end, leadership

is something people can take on without running for elected office.

“You can be a leader in many, many ways,” she said, “whether it’s in the union or in the community. You don’t need to be elected to a position to become involved.”

She encouraged women to look for ways that they can support Sodexo, Aramark and Compass sisters who will be bargaining a new contract in the fall, and to become involved in preparations for public-sector bargaining in 2010.

“It’s only through economic equality that we will be able to achieve equality,” she said. And then, in a reference to Sainte-Marie’s earlier remarks, she called for “more sisterhood, more solidarity” and an end to the “pecking order” that holds women back.

**PATTY GIBSON**



MARGIE BLANEY AND PATTY GIBSON PHOTOS

The HEU women’s committee worked closely with Provincial Office staff to make the union’s first women’s conference a huge success. They spared no detail in creating a warm and welcoming environment – complete with violet linen tablecloths and fresh flowers on each table. Keynote speaker Buffy Sainte-Marie took time after her address to meet with staff and members of both the First Nations and women’s committees.

Pictured here are women’s committee members: (from top left) Margie Anderson (PE), Louella Vincent (PE), Ami Dosanj, Lois MacDonald (staff), Irene Cawson, Máire Kirwan (staff), Debra Quesnel, Tanya Schlueter (staff); (from bottom left) Shajila Singh, Buffy Sainte-Marie and Judy Darcy.

“It’s been a very inspiring couple of days. As a Cree woman, listening to Buffy Sainte-Marie was profound. Meeting her was the chance of a lifetime.”

Wendy Warttig, *mental health care aide, Jubilee Care House (Williams Lake)*

“As a young woman, this has been such a privilege. There are so many women here with knowledge, experience and wisdom. For younger workers, we really need mentors to help involve us and guide us through the union.”

Kristin Kavanagh, *community support worker, WHR Lower Mainland*

“I’m so glad to have been accepted to come to this conference. It has been a really good learning experience for me. It totally took me out of my comfort zone.”

Selena Brown, *nursing aide, R.W. Large Memorial Hospital*

“This was very good. I’ve learned a lot. I feel a lot more confident for having attended and I would come again. Thank you.”

Irene Smith, *dietary aide, Sodexo at Powell River Hospital*

“As a newcomer, this conference showed me HEU. When you’re in the hospital you only know your own local. But here I see we are such a large, provincial organization, with such strong leaders. It made me feel very proud to be a part of it all.”

Ruth Ghebream, *staffing clerk, Vancouver General Hospital*

“I felt really comfortable and I met so many more sisters than I ever have before. We have a lot more common ground that we realize. I feel very lucky to have attended.”

Susan Burgess, *laundry worker, Penticton Regional Hospital*

“Couldn’t have been better. It was a good mix of workshops, lots of variety. I’m coming away strengthened and uplifted. Thank you everyone who put it on. Only one thing – there wasn’t any chocolate!”

Barbara Anderson, *community health worker, Parksville & District Home Support*

“This was a wonderful, first-time experience. It was great to see everyone in such good spirits, and communicating so well with each other.”

Jeanne Hawn, *pharmacy tech, Kootenay Lake District Hospital*

“This conference was just what the doctor ordered. It was so inspiring... it was something I needed personally. One of the things I’m taking away with me is how important balance in our lives is. I’m very excited to take the whole experience back to my local.”

Sheila Godfrey, *LPN, Mission Memorial Hospital*



## Saskatchewan pushes through anti-labour laws

The Saskatchewan Party government has brought in two laws that eliminate public-sector workers' right to strike and alter long-established labour rights and practices.

**Bill 5, the Public Service Essential Services Act**, requires public-sector unions and employers to begin negotiations on essential services at least 90 days prior to the expiry date of a contract. Essential services are defined as services where a full stop of activity would endanger public health and safety, would cause serious environmental damage, or the destruction or serious deterioration of machinery, equipment or premises.

If agreement can't be reached at the bargaining table, an employer's list of essential services would prevail. Under former legislation, unions were allowed to designate essential services.

The other bill passed is **Bill 6, the Trade Union Amendment Act**, which abolishes automatic union certification and raises the minimum percentage of signed cards needed to trigger a vote to 45 per cent—the highest threshold in Canada.

Saskatchewan Federation of Labour president Larry Hubich points to the June 2007 decision of the Supreme Court of Canada that struck down parts of B.C.'s **Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement Act**, while confirming the constitutional right of freedom of association and the procedural right to collective bargaining.

He said Saskatchewan public-sector unions are contemplating a similar legal challenge.

*Bulletin/CAUT/CALM)*

## HEU trades: the in-house advantage

**P**rivatization is threatening HEU trades and maintenance workers at Vernon Jubilee and Kelowna General hospitals, but the members are fighting back with a detailed proposal that demonstrates the advantage of in-house plant services over private contractors.

When the Interior Health Authority issued a request for proposals for the public-private partnership (P3) expansion projects at VJH and KGH, it included the contracting out of trades and maintenance work. Under the **Bill 29 Settlement Agreement**, members and the union must be consulted when privatization is considered. And they can put forward a case for keeping the status quo.

Trades and maintenance workers from HEU's Vernon and Kelowna and

amalgamated locals have advanced a strong business case that not only proves the affordability, effectiveness and efficiency of their services, but also contains innovative recommendations for training and apprenticeships that would address the critical labour shortage. Here are some of their arguments:

- HEU trades and maintenance staff know every corner of their facilities and have historical knowledge of systems and buildings.
- If a system breaks down, they can rebuild it rather than replace it, saving

the health authority tens of thousands of dollars every year.

- They can respond quickly and work together with other hospital employees to find the source of a problem and correct it.
- They are well-versed in infection control protocols and other safety procedures, so critical in health care.

Members also provided the IHA with examples of how staff respond to urgent and emergent incidents.

Last year, part of Vernon Jubilee Hospital was flooded. Water traveled down four floors. It was 4:00 a.m.

Despite the early hour, trades and maintenance workers were at the hospital within 20 minutes. They contained the damage and made repairs within hours.

On Christmas Day, an elevator breakdown trapped a patient inside, who had a serious condition that required specific medication within two hours. The private elevator service company was not able

to respond. But the hospital's electrician, already on-shift, was. Within 15 minutes, he had the patient out of the elevator and on her way to treatment.

More recently, when the hospital experienced a loss of power, everything



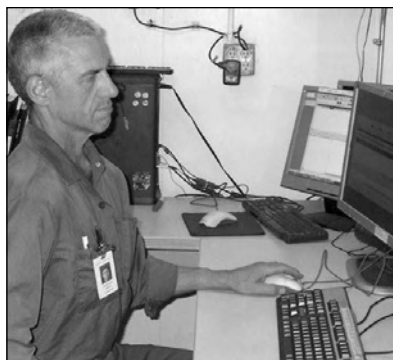
**Andrew Kiewewetter, a machinist/millwright/3rd class power engineer is one of several multi-ticketed maintenance staff at Kelowna General Hospital.**

went down. Despite emergency back-up generators, the problem had to be resolved quickly or surgeries would be cancelled. Trades and maintenance personnel fanned out through the hospital, checking with various departments. The cause was identified in the kitchen and remedied in 45 minutes. Team work, expertise and systems' knowledge combined to bring everything back online.

Our members who keep the complex plumbing, heating, electrical and other systems running smoothly and safely are qualified, experienced professionals. They ensure that these hospitals – and in some cases, other health authority facilities – are safe and well-maintained. They have a collective knowledge of our facilities that money can't buy.

Keeping our trades and maintenance workers in-house makes good sense. Their services are cost-effective and cost-saving. Their innovation and ingenuity is unlimited. And their commitment to their facilities and public health care is irreplaceable.

**MARGI BLAMEY**



**Shift engineer Barry Watts and his union brothers saved Vernon Jubilee thousands of dollars by building a heat recovery system from scratch.**

## >>notebook>>



**Resolutions adopted by HEU's 1960 convention reflect the deep roots of this union's tradition of social justice.**

## Union's actions 48 years ago still resonate today

Recent news that the *Guardian's* union press shop for the past 48 years is closing its doors inspired me to seek out the August 1960 edition of the paper, the first printed for us by Broadway Printers.

These were heady times when our union faced developments here and abroad that resonate to this day.

"Pension scheme now in effect," reads one headline in a story marking the inclusion of all acute care hospital employees in the Municipal Pension Plan in July 1960, after a long campaign by HEU.

"Pensioners need social security," reads another, noting an HEU resolution to a labour convention pressing for a national pension plan (the Canadian Pension Plan – CPP – was established six years later).

Resolutions adopted by delegates to the 1960 HEU convention – and reported in the *Guardian* – reflect the deep roots of this union's tradition of social justice.

One resolution took aim at the federal government for "not condemning the South African government for its discriminatory practices" or its "murderous methods in quelling riots and demonstrations." Another called for peace and disarmament, noting that

"stockpiling of nuclear warheads and nuclear weapons is no longer a deterrent."

The paper also covered the announcement by Saskatchewan doctors that they would be shutting down their high profile campaign against the CCF government of Tommy Douglas, and its plans for medicare.

But the front page story in the August 1960 *Guardian* focused on an issue closer to home – the September 12, 1960 provincial election.

Urging members to the ballot box, secretary-business manager Bill Black warned of big business' financial support for political parties that would undermine plans for a national medical plan, affordable education, and support for the unemployed.

"They believe workers are expendable, a dime a dozen," wrote Black. "They don't believe in social change, the welfare state, in security, in public ownership. They have one goal – brutally made profit – no matter who may be sacrificed."

Some things never change.

**MIKE OLD • HEU COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**



# Unions tackle climate change

Our planet is in **PERIL**. There's no longer any question about that.

The concentration of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere is causing global temperatures to increase to such an extent that scientists predict instances of drought, flooding, species extinction, and water shortages will increase, unless dramatic steps are taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In response, the labour movement in Canada and around the world has taken on an increasingly important advocacy role in the fight to stop climate change – moving from issues that were primarily rooted in health and safety concerns to a growing position of leadership in the fight to preserve the whole planet.

In the process, it's debunking the myth that good jobs will be lost by ridding ourselves of wasteful, polluting industries.

At their annual convention in late May, Canadian Labour Congress delegates adopted a policy paper entitled *Climate Change and Green Jobs: Labour's Challenges and Opportunities* that recognizes climate change as "the most pressing issue of our times." Along with a host of like-minded resolutions, its adoption underscored

the trade union movement's call for strategies to avert catastrophic climate change.

During a featured panel discussion, Canadian environmentalists stressed the need for labour, First Nations, environmental and conservation

communities to act together on a common agenda.

Labour's solutions include two complementary tracks.

The first concerns the creation of "green" jobs – the jobs that are needed to design and construct non-polluting, energy-efficient "green" buildings or to create alternative energy-producing enterprises that harness wind or solar power.

Green or "green collar" jobs come from public investment in mass transit, promoting greater energy efficiency and developing renewable energy sources. The second track is called "just transition," whereby workers who lose their jobs through environmental initiatives are compensated for lost wages, enabling them to continue earning a full salary while being retrained for green jobs.

The dollars needed to implement the plan would come from the federal government's investment of \$30 billion over 10 years to create 300,000 jobs. The expenditure would be recouped through increased tax revenues.

The move toward green solutions, however, must create "green collar" jobs that are secure, locally-based, unionized, and pay decent wages and benefits.

Without those requirements, one participant on the climate change panel pointed out, "We could make a transition to a green future where there are less unions, communities are more impacted, the poor are more poor and the rich more rich."

Earlier this spring, labour representatives from B.C., Oregon and



California attended a session of the Western

Climate Initiative in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The WCI includes several provinces and U.S. states that share a common

goal: reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 15 per cent below 2005 levels by 2020.

"We know that efforts to deal with global warming present major opportunities to create good, family-wage jobs," said Barbara Byrd, secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO, "but only if labour is at the table to insist on wage and benefit standards."

Internationally, labour is steadily taking its place at the forefront of the climate change battle.

In Germany, trade unions are part of an Alliance for Work and the Environment aimed at reducing CO2 emissions. In Spain, labour participates in Sectoral Round Tables on Social Dialogue to implement the Kyoto Protocol in industrial sectors. In Argentina, the government has adopted a program on work and the environment. And in Brazil, the ministries of environment and labour are

negotiating the adoption of a similar program.

Last year, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) joined with social and environmental groups in a joint study of the impact CO2 emission reduction measures on employment.

And on the International Labour Organization's website alone there are almost 2,000 reports and papers on climate change.

Here at home, the Canadian Union of Public Employees – like several other unions across the country – is urging members to take on environmental issues through ensuring workers have a joint role in advancing sustainable practices in their workplace and educating members about climate change and measures that can prevent it.

If you're looking for more information about what you can do in your workplace, check out CUPE's recently published booklet *Healthy, Clean & GREEN*. You can view it online at [www.cupe.ca](http://www.cupe.ca) or e-mail [mfirth@cupe.ca](mailto:mfirth@cupe.ca) to request copies.

**DAN KEETON • VANCOUVER WRITER**



## >>voices>>



**The apology gives us an opportunity to recognize and respect the fundamental human rights of Indigenous peoples.**

## It's time to move from apology to action

On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians for Canada's role in the Indian Residential Schools System.

Indian residential schools were designed to "educate" and "Christianize" us – "to kill the Indian in the child". As children and students, we experienced and felt deeply our removal from our parents, family, community, cultures and languages. The legacy of the Residential Schools System is ongoing. Any Aboriginal leader or social worker/counsellor will tell you of the devastating pain suffered today by individuals, families and even entire communities stemming from the trauma experienced in residential schools.

An apology alone is not reconciliation. An apology cannot undo history. But we must seek to understand our history better. This better understanding will help support the many important efforts and initiatives that become acts of reconciliation.

Action is a significant part of any apology. As an integral part of the reconciliation process, Canada must demonstrate unequivocal respect for the human rights of Indigenous peoples by endorsing

and implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. This Declaration, adopted by the UN's General Assembly on September 13, 2007, affirms the "minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being" of Indigenous peoples. Canada was one of only four countries to vote against the Declaration.

To inspire all Canadians to take part in the reconciliation process, the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission should encourage government ministries and departments, along with such organizations as labour unions, industry, faith and environmental groups, to develop "Apology to Action" plans. These plans should set realistic, achievable goals to build lasting and productive relations with Indigenous peoples.

The apology provides us with a unique opportunity to recognize and respect the fundamental human rights of Indigenous peoples. Let us move from apology to action with dignity and pride.

**GRAND CHIEF EDWARD JOHN**  
FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT POLITICAL EXECUTIVE



## Benchmark review makes progress

Talks between the Facilities Bargaining Association and the Health Employers Association of B.C. continue as both parties try to resolve a series of benchmark reviews.

To date, they've reached "agreement in principle" on revised language for a number of benchmarks including rehab assistants; activity workers III and IV; coordinators of volunteers; accountants I and II; pathology attendants I, II and III; accounting supervisors; orthopaedic technologists; social service assistants I, and ophthalmic technicians.

But, so far, they have yet to resolve wage grids.

The parties could not reach

agreement on benchmark revisions to social service assistants II and III; renal technicians I, II and III, or health records technicians, and HEABC has resisted any benchmark recognition or compensation for members who provide training and education to other staff or students.

Final agreement will not be made on any benchmark updates unless the parties agree to adequate wage rates, as well as the benchmark language changes. Without a final agreement, current benchmark language and wage grids will stay in place.

In 2006 bargaining, the FBA negotiated \$2 million from health employers for rate adjustments resulting from

the review of benchmarks listed on page 209 of the facilities collective agreement.

"We could not have made the progress we have so far without the valuable input and the first-hand accounts from members about the critical work they do," says HEU classifications representative Loni Mezzarobba. "Our next step will be monetary talks with HEABC in the fall."

## Nursing unit assistants denied new wage grid

After establishing a new nursing unit assistant benchmark with HEABC in November 2005, the FBA has fought tirelessly for a new wage grid to match the added responsibilities and job duties.

In May, however, an arbitra-

tor sided with health employers and ruled against referring the matter to a referee.

But during 2006 facilities bargaining, HEU was successful in securing special adjustments for nursing unit assistants – on top of the general wage increases – with an additional one per cent in 2007, 2008 and 2009, plus a lump-sum payment in 2006 equivalent to one per cent of straight time hours worked in the year prior to the expiry of the 2004-2006 contract.

## Guardian wins award

HEU's news magazine the *Guardian* recently picked up an Excellence in Writing award during the Canadian Association of Labour Media conference in Toronto. It's

the second consecutive year the union has received this honour.

The CALM award – which recognized the *Guardian's* 2007 fall/winter issue on seniors' care – was presented at a dinner gala on May 23.

The *Guardian* has won a number of design and writing awards over the last two decades.

## Month of action to engage young workers

Young workers are an essential part of the union's future.

That's why HEU is launching its first "Month of Action to Engage Young Workers" this September.

Organized by HEU's young workers subcommittee, locals will receive packages in the

# Bargaining conference rallies support

"A lot of people never thought we'd see this day," HEU's secretary-business manager Judy Darcy told the more than 100 delegates gathered at the union's first-ever 'Big 3' bargaining conference.

"Government and your employers fought you every step of the way," she said, referring to the many struggles and victories that brought delegates to the historic gathering at the end of March.

From demanding their right to choose HEU as their union, to standing strong in the 12-week-long Sodexo strike in 2005, to negotiating first contracts with their multinational employers and enforcing them in the workplace, members employed by Sodexo, Aramark and Compass have taken on huge challenges.

As the two-day conference unfolded, hospital cleaners and food service workers from around the Lower Mainland, the Sunshine

Coast, and central and southern Vancouver Island shared their stories, frustrations and solutions, making it clear that they're ready to keep up the pressure.

Gurmeet Ghuman, who works as a cook for Sodexo, said it gave her strength to meet other members with similar struggles.

"I feel really hopeful. We're not by ourselves if we use everybody's voices," said Ghuman, who was also elected to her bargaining committee.

"I really liked mixing with other workers, it was really a gathering of union brothers and sisters," she added. "I found out everyone wants the same thing, everywhere we work it's the same issues."

Fair, family-supporting wages, improved benefits and pension plans, safer working conditions, and adequate sick days were just some of the issues that

members will be taking to the table when their collective agreements expire this fall.

Delegates also discussed the advantages of coor-

Illegal, and the Philippine Women's Centre – told delegates that their work for economic justice is an essential part of broader efforts to improve local

economies, reduce child poverty and advocate for immigrant and marginalized workers.

HEU's Provincial Executive also attended the conference as observers to hear first-hand about the realities of short-staffing, unmanageable workloads, low wages, and other issues facing more than 3,500 union members.

HEU president Fred Muzin and financial secretary Donisa Bernardo congratulated delegates for stand-

ing firm despite attempts by government, health authorities and their multinational employers to devalue their work, drive down their wages and set them apart from the rest of the health care team.

On behalf of the Provincial Executive, Muzin and Bernardo told delegates that the whole union stands with them in the fight for their rights to living wages and safe working conditions.

The conference also heightened the profile of the Living Wage Campaign during a short march that took delegates through the neighbourhood wearing placards describing what a living wage would mean to them. Participants wore campaign T-shirts that proclaimed "work should lift you out of poverty, not keep you there."



Above: Delegates exchange ideas and information about their bargaining priorities and goals. Right: Members answer the question, "What does a living wage mean to me?"



inating bargaining strategies and uniting their efforts with the successes and momentum of the Living Wage Campaign.

Emphasizing the campaign's potential to help members make gains in this upcoming round of negotiations, Darcy said, "I can't begin to count the reasons or the stories as to why you need a living wage. So many people leave at 6 a.m. and get home after dark. So many of you go without so your kids can have a healthy lunch... for these reasons and so many more, you need a living wage."

And the conference heard that it's not just workers and families who benefit from fair, living wages. A panel of community representatives – including First Call, B.C.'s Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, the BC Nurses' Union, Vancity Credit Union, No one is





**Like hundreds of HEU support workers across the province, Royal Inland housekeeper Kelly Bruno helped make the union's second annual Support Workers Day a resounding success. This year, HEU's support worker and occupational health and safety committees joined together to sponsor events celebrating the often invisible, but critical, work these members do to maintain a safe and comfortable environment for patients, staff and visitors.**

continued on page 14

mail with posters, stickers, resource kits and ideas for reaching out to younger members and involving them in their union locals.

Suggestions include encouraging young workers to attend September local meetings, hosting a pizza lunch or potluck that focuses on sharing experiences with young workers, and wearing the *Inform, Educate, Inspire* stickers during the month of September.

A growing number of unions in Canada are recognizing the importance of mobilizing the next generation of shop stewards, local leaders and activists who will build on past achievements and ensure a strong labour movement for the future.

### Committee recognized for community work

The union's Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee (LGSC) was recently nominated by Dr. Iain Mackie for a HERO award in recognition of their ongoing work in the HIV/AIDS community at this year's AccolAIDS ceremony.

Dr. Mackie, director of the HIV/AIDS clinical care team at Vancouver Hospital & Health Sciences Centre, threw his support behind the committee's nomination for its commitment and dedication to the cause.

Over the years, the LGSC has raised thousands of dollars for the B.C. Persons with AIDS Society through fundraising initiatives like skydiving, walkathons, barbecues, penny drives, and raffles.

The committee was acknowledged in the AccolAIDS Social/Political/Community Action category during the April 13 fundraising gala at Vancouver's Fairmont Hotel, where this year's HEU-sponsored award was presented to community activist Gary Dalton of Cranbrook.

The event – attended by some 250 people – raised about \$97,000 to support programs and services for people living with HIV/AIDS.

### FBA Education Fund: upcoming deadlines

Training assistance for regular employees (and displaced employees within their recall period) who are covered by the Health Services & Support Facilities Subsector

collective agreement is available through the Facilities Bargaining Association Education Fund.

The \$5 million fund, which was secured in the 2006 round of bargaining, assists members to take courses related to their current jobs or to advance their careers in health care through more extensive training programs.

Applications for short-term training are reviewed on a continuing basis. The next long-term application deadline is October 16, 2008.

Long-term deadlines for 2009 will be announced in the fall.

Information and application forms are available on HEU's website at [www.heu.org](http://www.heu.org), or by calling 604-456-7146 or toll-free 1-800-663-5813, ext. 7146.

# for fall negotiations



OLIVE DEMPSEY PHOTOS

**Despite serious discussions, delegates stayed in high spirits throughout the two-day bargaining conference.**

The march drew attention and support from passersby, with photos appearing in news stories in Vancouver and Nanaimo the following day.

The positive, public response was no surprise. During the conference, HEU released a province-wide poll that showed over 90 per cent of British Columbians believe health authorities should ensure contractors in public hospitals pay fair, family-supporting wages.

The poll also found 87 per cent of British Columbians believe that no full-time worker in a B.C. hospital should need to have a second job just to make ends meet.

In the afternoon of the second day, delegates participated in a series of hands-on workshops on a variety of topics that provided delegates tools to inform and activate members in upcoming negotia-

tions, and to support them in their day-to-day fight for safe and respectful working conditions.

The conference concluded with a standing ovation for their newly-elected bargaining committees, who will be taking members' demands, hopes and determination into this fall's negotiations.

Bargaining committee member Cora Mojica says the stories she heard during the conference will keep her focused.

"I saw the suffering of other members," said Mojica. "Some of them are afraid to speak out, they're scared and intimidated and afraid of losing their jobs."

"That gives me a strong sense of motivation that if we work together and build solidarity among all members, we can improve the situation and we can make change."

OLIVE DEMPSEY

**A recent poll shows over 90 per cent of British Columbians believe health authorities should make sure contractors pay fair, family-supporting wages.**

## >> factfile

The multi-year contracts between the "Big 3" and four of B.C.'s health authorities are worth about \$643 million.

In 2007, Sodexo CEO Michel Landel took home more than C\$3.5 million, Compass Group CEO Richard Cousins pocketed more than C\$4.5 million, and Aramark CEO Richard Neubauer took home C\$8.3 million in salary and benefits.

A housekeeper or food service worker employed full-time at \$13.05 an hour would have to work 140 years to earn the same amount the lowest paid 'Big 3' CEO makes in one year.

In 2005, Compass subsidiary Eurest Support Services was suspended as a registered contractor for the United Nations after accusations of corruption involving the award of contracts.

The University of California recently decided to directly employ Sodexo support workers, after more than a year of lobbying and demonstrations by students and workers demanding decent wages and benefits.

A 2007 report for Florida Department of Corrections found Aramark was collecting "windfall profits" from its food service contract with the state's prisons. It showed the state could save approximately \$7 million per year if they brought the work back under state administration.

Over 130 U.S. cities now have living wage laws, requiring companies who receive government contracts to pay fair, living wages.



continued from page 13

## HEU clerical workers tackle workload

The HEU clerical subcommittee has produced a special poster and issue of its newsletter *PaperWork* aimed at raising awareness about the workload problem in health care. Posters and newsletters were distributed to locals in June as part of the committee's workload campaign.

Clerical workers make up about 20 per cent of the union's membership and have seen vast changes to their daily work life with evolving technology and computer programs, added duties and responsibilities, and chronic short-staffing.

The committee is encouraging members to use the language in the collective

agreement around hours of work and paid breaks; ask their managers to prioritize job duties, and work with others to find ways that will make workloads more manageable.

For information on HEU's clerical subcommittee, check out Member Resources on the union's website.

## Aboriginal Solidarity Day a time to reflect

Many HEU First Nations members commemorated Aboriginal Solidarity Day, June 21, with events across the province, including the *Walk-4-Justice* in Vancouver to honour First Nations women who have gone missing or have died through violence.

And through the support of HEU First Nations

Standing Committee members, the Overlander local has decided to hold a monthly First Nations cultural day where Elders, dancers, drummers and storytellers will address First Nations residents and staff.

The committee has also produced a new handbook and book of traditional recipes.

## HEU supports local AIDS fundraiser

HEU's Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee is once again organizing a team for Vancouver's AIDS WALK for LIFE, and encourages members, staff, family and friends to participate. This year's 10 km walk around Stanley Park – or 2 km stroll around the Lost Lagoon – takes place on September 21.



MIKE OLD PHOTO

HEU's 20-member corporate team *Running for a Living Wage*, co-sponsored by the union and its living wage campaign, joined nearly 60,000 other brave souls on April 20 in bone-chilling temperatures for the Vancouver Sun Run 2008. The 10 km, timed race is the largest in Canada and second largest in the world.

The committee is also holding a pre-fundraising dance on September 19 at Vancouver's Wise Hall. The HEU team has raised about \$12,000 for the British

Columbia Persons with AIDS Society over the past five years. For more information, visit HEU's website at [www.heu.org](http://www.heu.org) under Human Rights.

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

### AUGUST 4

B.C. Day  
(HEU offices closed)

### AUGUST 5 (5 P.M.)

Deadline to submit HEU convention credentials, as well as Constitutional Amendments and Resolutions

### SEPTEMBER 1

Labour Day  
(HEU offices closed)

### SEPT 3-6

HEU Provincial Executive meeting

### SEPT 18

Proposed Constitutional Amendments and Resolutions circulated to locals

### OCTOBER 13

Thanksgiving Day  
(HEU offices closed)

### OCT 20-22

HEU Provincial Executive meeting

### OCT 23-26

CUPE National OH&S Conference (St. John's)

### NOV 3-7

HEU's Biennial Convention

## A poignant portrait of love and loss

For anyone who has witnessed a loved one fade away through dementia or has grappled with choices around treatment – at home or in a residential care facility – the critically acclaimed, Canadian film *Away from Her*, recently released on DVD, is a must-see.

Adapted from Alice Munro's short story "The Bear Came Over The Mountain", *Away from Her* is as much a love story as it is a commentary on aging and the conditions of residential care.

*Away from Her* tells the story of a Southern Ontario couple coping with the wife's early onset of Alzheimer's, and her choice to move into a nursing home despite her husband's resistance.

Canadian writer-director Sarah Polley unveils Grant and Fiona's five-decade relationship through flashbacks with picturesque imagery, and by weaving the complexity of Fiona's disease into the storyline.

"I think I may be beginning to disappear," Fiona tells Grant, her husband of 44 years.

I've watched the film twice, laughing and crying at the same scenes. Polley develops the characters so realistically that she draws you into their lives through familiarity, sympathy and admiration. When Grant (played by Canadian actor Gordon Pinsent) forms supportive friendships with Fiona's nurse and a resident's wife, he slowly reveals that he wasn't always the best husband.

Polley avoids the temptation of portraying Grant as an overly devoted husband, watching helplessly as his wife turns her affections to another resident. Instead, she creates a complex character whose feelings of guilt, loneliness and denial make him more human. One example is when Fiona (played by Oscar-winning, British actress Julie Christie) doesn't recognize Grant or remember his visits, yet still clings to old memories that he wishes she'd forget.

Although many successful movies have been produced on aging – *Driving Miss Daisy*, *On Golden Pond*, and more recently *The Bucket List* – this award-winning film is unique in that Fiona takes control and is the one – not her caregiver – to make the decision to go into care. In fact, she ignores all of Grant's



Canadian actress Sarah Polley in action on the set of her celebrated directorial debut – *Away from Her*.

## Film Review

### *Away from Her*

Written and directed by Sarah Polley.

Starring:

Julie Christie and Gordon Pinsent

(PG-13, 110 minutes).  
Now available on DVD.

repeated pleas to stay at home, saying, "I think all we can aspire to in this situation is a little bit of grace."

My only criticism of *Away from Her* is Polley's somewhat rose-coloured view of life in a nursing home: Fiona's room resembles a comfortable bachelor suite; most residents have regular visitors, and the only nurse you ever see onscreen has time to play games and read to individual residents. Unfortunately, it's an idealized portrayal of care that does not reflect the deteriorating conditions in many nursing homes today.

In Canada, much has been reported on the growing crisis in seniors' care that is characterized by inadequate funding, short-staffing and crushing workloads.

Nonetheless, the young, actress-turned-filmmaker – perhaps best known for her roles in *The Sweet Hereafter* and the CBC-TV series "Road to Avonlea" – delivers an engaging film that explores relationships, tackles a sensitive topic, and carefully blends drama with humour.

We can certainly anticipate other progressive projects from Sarah Polley that challenge viewers and spark dialogue on controversial issues.

BRENDA WHITEHALL

## HEU nurses honoured

Congratulations to LPNs **Cynthia Lee** (Vancouver General Hospital) and **Anita Dickson** (Royal Columbian), who were among 150 health care professionals to receive the *B.C. Outstanding Nurses, 2008 Recognition Award* during National Nursing Week in May.



LEE

Cynthia has worked at VGH since 1978, starting in the LPN float pool, and assigned to a variety of units, like Burns and Plastics, Urology, Ortho, medicine and surgery.

"My thanks to those people who have nominated me for this prestigious award," says Cynthia. "I share this award with all my colleagues, past and present, who all shaped me to be the person I am today."

Anita brings years of experience, activism and dedication to the emergency department at RCH, where she formed an LPN Professional Practice Council, a model so successful that she's been asked to help other facilities form their own.

"I am so proud, as an LPN, to be recognized," says Anita. "I accept the award on behalf of our profession, in recognition of the many licensed practical nurses in B.C. who are outstanding nurses."

Recipients were selected by a panel, after being nominated by two professional peers, and by meeting criteria in 10 categories that included stan-

dards of care and professional practice, demonstrating innovation and leadership skills, and community activism.

Congratulations to **Victor Elkins**, an HEU cardiac perfusionist, who was chosen to be one of 230 people to participate in the Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference.

At the end of the two-week study tour, participants – who were selected through a rigorous, nationwide application process – wrote and presented reports to Governor General Michaëlle Jean in Ottawa.

This year's theme was "leadership and community." The goal was to educate Canada's future leaders in business, unions, the community and government by broadening their practical experience; improving their decision-making and communication skills, and expanding their knowledge of Canada – socially, economically and culturally.

## Retirements

HEU wishes care aide **Carole Hopkins** well in her retirement. Carole worked at Banfield for 10 years, starting in 1973, and then spent 20 years at Brock Fahrni.

Mount St. Mary's bids a fond retirement farewell to purchasing clerk **Don Bernardin** after 20 years of service; and finance clerk **Judi Clark** after 26 years as an HEU member.

Members at Central Care Home in Victoria wish

**Rachelle Perrier**, a care aide of 27 years, and **Angela Davis**, a care aide of 18 years, a happy retirement.

## HEU staff retirements

After 20 years of dedicated service to HEU, **Janet Fairbanks** will be retiring from the union in the early fall.

The Comox-based servicing representative became a member of HEU in 1974 when she began working at Bevan Lodge as a bus driver and wood-working instructor. With the closure of the home in 1988, Fairbanks was hired onto the HEU staff as a servicing representative, and for a period of time worked in the union's education department.

Fairbanks plans to continue with her many volunteer activities, which include promoting the sale of fair trade goods, organizing the World Community Film Festival in Courtenay, and raising money for the Stephen Lewis Foundation. We wish her well.

Prince George servicing representative **Mary Pat Wiley** will be replacing Fairbanks in the Courtenay office.

The HEU staff also congratulates colleague **Rey Umlas**, who recently retired as a servicing representative. A pharmacy technician by trade, Rey came to HEU in 1992 after working at St. Paul's Hospital since 1972. He plans to continue the fight for public health care and workers' rights, and hopes to run for political office.

## You can

1. save HEU money
2. save trees
3. get your *Guardian* quickly

by notifying us promptly of any change of address. Just clip this coupon, which has your mailing label on the back, fill in your new address below and mail to the *Guardian*, 5000 North Fraser Way, Burnaby V5J 5M3.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Facility \_\_\_\_\_

# GUARDIAN

"In humble dedication to all those who toil to live."

EDITOR  
**Mike Old**

MANAGING EDITOR  
**Patty Gibson**

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
**Margi Blamey**

DESKTOP PRODUCTION  
**Elaine Happer**

DESIGN CONSULTATION  
**Kris Klaasen,**  
**Working Design**

PRINTING  
**Mitchell Press**

The *Guardian* is published on behalf of the Provincial Executive of the Hospital Employees' Union, under the direction of the following editorial committee:

**Fred Muzin, Judy Darcy,**  
**Donisa Bernardo, Ken Robinson,**  
**Victor Elkins, Boni Barcia,**  
**Doreen Plouffe**

### PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE

**Fred Muzin**  
President  
**Judy Darcy**  
Secretary-Business Manager

**Donisa Bernardo**  
Financial Secretary

**Ken Robinson**  
1st Vice-President

**Victor Elkins**  
2nd Vice-President

**Boni Barcia**  
3rd Vice-President

**Doreen Plouffe**  
Senior Trustee

**Kelly Knox**  
Senior Trustee Elect

**Jacqueline Zilkie**  
Trustee

**Carolyn Unsworth**  
Regional Vice-President  
Fraser Valley

**Joanne Foote**  
Regional Vice-President  
Fraser Valley

**Margie Anderson**  
Regional Vice-President  
Interior

**Becky Jacobson**  
Regional Vice-President  
Interior

**Carol Kenzie**  
Regional Vice-President  
Interior

**Bev Trynchy**  
Regional Vice-President  
Vancouver Coastal

**Kevin O'Neil**  
Regional Vice-President  
Vancouver Coastal

**Louella Vincent**  
Regional Vice-President  
Vancouver Coastal

**Lois Doran**  
Regional Vice-President  
North

**Jean Birch**  
Regional Vice-President  
North

**Sandra Giesbrecht**  
Regional Vice-President  
Vancouver Island

**Carol Bunch**  
Regional Vice-President  
Vancouver Island

**Dave Pellerin**  
First Alternate  
Provincial Executive

### UNION OFFICES

**Provincial Office**  
5000 North Fraser Way  
Burnaby V5J 5M3  
604-438-5000  
E-MAIL [heu@heu.org](mailto:heu@heu.org)  
INTERNET [www.heu.org](http://www.heu.org)

### Regional Offices

**VANCOUVER ISLAND**  
**Victoria Site**  
201-415 Gorge Road East  
Victoria V8T 2W1  
(250) 480-0533

**Comox Site**  
6 – 204 North Island Highway  
Courtenay, V9N 3P1  
(250) 331-0368

**INTERIOR REGION**  
**Kelowna Site**  
100-160 Dougall Rd. S.  
Kelowna V1X 3J4  
(250) 765-8838

**Nelson Site**  
745 Baker St.  
Nelson V1L 4J5  
(250) 354-4466

**NORTHERN**  
1197 Third Ave.  
Prince George V2L 3E4  
(250) 564-2102

## EQUITY PHONE LINE

1.800.663.5813, ext. 7192  
Lower Mainland 604.456.7192

### PRESS 1

## Ethnic Diversity

One union, many colours! Working across our differences! To participate, please call and leave us your name!

### PRESS 2

## First Nations

First Nations members would like to hear from you! Please call if you would like to help educate our union sisters and brothers on issues that affect First Nations People.

### PRESS 3

## Lesbians and Gays

For support: afraid of being identified, feeling isolated, want to know your rights? Call for information on same-sex benefits, fighting homophobia and discrimination. [www.pridepages.org](http://www.pridepages.org)

### PRESS 4

## People with disAbilities

If you are on WCB, LTD, or if invisibly or visibly disabled in the workplace, let us know how the union can better meet your needs.



ALL CALLS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

## Talk to us Toll-Free!

You can call any HEU office toll-free to deal with a problem or get information. It's fast, easy and free.

### PROVINCIAL OFFICE

• Burnaby Site  
1-800-663-5813

### REGIONAL OFFICES

**Northern Office**  
• Prince George  
1-800-663-6539

**Okanagan Office**  
• Kelowna  
1-800-219-9699

### Vancouver Island Offices

• Victoria Site  
1-800-742-8001

• Comox Site  
1-800-624-9940

**Kootenay Office**  
• Nelson  
1-800-437-9877





## RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS APOLOGY

# An essential step on the path to reconciliation

### *from apology to action*

British Columbians join with Aboriginal Peoples in recognizing the importance of the June 11 apology for the horrific abuses in residential schools.

And we pledge to do our part to move forward from apology to action – to go forward with Aboriginal Peoples on the path to reconciliation, self-determination, dignity and justice that has so long been denied.

A message from B.C.'s unions — and our members province-wide.

B.C. Federation of Labour • B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union • BC Teachers' Federation • Canadian Auto Workers • Canadian Labour Congress • Canadian Office & Professional Employees Union 378 • Canadian Union of Public Employees BC • Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, Western Region • Health Sciences Association • Hospital Employees' Union • International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers • International Longshore and Warehouse Union • International Operating Engineers • Public Service Alliance of Canada, B.C. Region • United Steelworkers, District 3



AGREEMENT NUMBER 40007486

RETURN TO  
The Guardian  
5000 North Fraser Way  
Burnaby, BC  
V5J 5M3