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CONVENTION 2010 OUR MEMBERS, OUR STRENGTH





CONVENTION PHOTOS BY KIM STALLKNECHT

Building a strong, modern union that gives every member a voice

The 27th biennial convention of the Hospital Employees' Union held October 24 to 29 in Vancouver was the union's largest, with more than 600 delegates in attendance.

Those numbers alone are a testament to the resilience of HEU members, who have not just survived a decade of the Campbell Liberals and their anti-worker policies, but have revitalized the union.

That's borne out by the fact that more than 2,500 new members have joined the union's ranks in the last two years alone, as unorganized health care workers turn to HEU to help them win a better life for themselves and their families.

But there's also no question that 10 years of privatization and restructuring – and ongoing attacks on wages and working conditions – have fundamentally changed the union.

And that's the challenge that faced convention delegates in October. How do we change our union to better reflect the changing reality of our members? And how do we chart a course that will take us through the uncertain

times that lie ahead?

In this special issue of the *Guardian*, we're providing expanded convention coverage including an in-depth look at the 20 women and men elected to the Provincial Executive to lead the union over the next two years.

Delegates also adopted a strategic plan to build and strengthen the union – in our locals, across our occupational groups and sectors, in our communities and based on the diverse backgrounds of our members.

You can read about the plan – Our Members, Our Strength – and about the other policy directions supported by delegates, starting on page 10.

But there's no question that one of the most important decisions made by delegates in October was to overhaul the bargaining provisions of HEU's *Constitution and By-Laws*.

There's no question that one of the most important decisions was to overhaul the bargaining provisions of HEU's constitution and by-laws.

The reality of HEU in 2010 is that one out of every four members is no longer covered by the facilities collective agreement.

But the rules governing the way HEU sets bargaining policy and selects bargaining committees were designed at a time when more than 90 per cent of members were covered by a single agreement.

Twenty-five per cent of HEU members now work for private-sector employers, independent long-term care operators, in First Nations' health services or in the community health or social services sectors.

Delegates modernized the union's *Constitution and By-Laws* so that HEU members outside the facilities agreement have a formalized process for submitting bargaining demands, holding bargaining conferences and electing bargaining committees.

It's all about building a strong and modern union that gives every HEU member a voice.



JUDY DARCY

Turning the tide in seniors care

Our 27th biennial convention was a tremendous success in every way. HEU members brought their ideas, energy and passion into every discussion throughout our five-day deliberations.

As I listened to delegates – first time speakers and seasoned activists alike – I was again struck by the deep caring HEU

members bring to the issues that matter most to them as workers and as advocates for all of us who depend on our public health care system.

It's time to bring oversight and accountability back into long term care. And it's time to hold operators accountable for maintaining a stable, experienced workforce.

the challenges ahead.

One of the biggest challenges we have today is the continuing crisis in seniors' care. Our union has a long tradition of caring for seniors. Our efforts to improve the quality of care in seniors' facilities date back to the 1970s when we first organized B.C.'s nursing homes.

I was also struck by the heartfelt expressions of thanks and support that came from our guest speakers. Over and over again, people not only recognized the value of HEU members' work in caring for patients and residents – they applauded the leadership our members take in standing up and speaking out for quality care.

And we adjourned with a clear consensus on the directions we will take over the next two years to build a strong, united union to meet

And we were successful on many fronts. As working conditions improved, so did our ability to deliver higher standards of care.

But a lot has changed since then. A decade-long drive to privatize the sector and lower wages has disrupted continuity of care and created havoc in facility after facility across this province.

In fact, the privatization agenda is being driven quite openly, despite clear evidence that not-for-profit care produces far better outcomes for seniors than care provided by for-profit operators. And that's because profits in long term care can only come from two places – from workers and from seniors.

Today contracting-out, contract flipping and de-accreditation are all compromising the quality of care in seniors' homes throughout B.C.

No one knows this better than HEU members who work in long term care and who witness the devastation first hand. But every HEU member is touched by it – whether through a parent, a grandparent, a partner, a neighbour or a friend.

As a union with a proud history of fighting for, and winning, better care for seniors we are uniquely positioned – and have a unique responsibility – to galvanize the public pressure needed to restore quality care.

It's time to bring oversight and accountability back into long term care. It's time to hold operators accountable for maintaining a stable, experienced workforce. And it's time for government to act on the recommendations from the B.C. Ombudsperson's investigation into seniors' care.

Our seniors deserve nothing less.

voice.mail

Thank you for the support

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your assistance throughout the [FBA Education Fund] process. As you know, it was a long process to make my education goals a reality, with many unknowns and challenges. Your helpfulness, patience, and clear information went a long way to helping me to make sure that my FBA fund application was received correctly and in a timely manner. Your helpful and positive attitude are very much recognized and appreciated.

The FBA Education fund played a huge role in my success at school. I am sure you are well aware of the financial struggles of a student. The LPN program was extremely challenging and having some

financial security ensure my success. Although I was on an LOA from full-time work and working a .15 position, I had to take many days off throughout the year due to the course demands such as exams and assignments. This would not have been possible without the security of the fund, and would have impacted my success in the program.

If there is anything that I can do in the future to help to advocate for the continuation of this fund, please let me know. It would be an honour to help other people to reach their educational goals.

MARGERY DUDA

City Centre Care Local

Ed. note: Duda is a social service assistant who accessed the FBA Education Fund to take the LPN program. She will receive the Lieutenant Governor's silver medal which recognizes students in career programs who have excelled in their studies.

Everyone belongs

December 3, 2010 is the United Nations Day of Persons with Disabilities.

It's an important opportunity to honour the achievements of people with disabilities, and to reflect on what needs to be done so that everyone, able-bodied and disabled, is a real part of our human family.

People with disabilities are uniquely isolated from much of society. Our incomes are the lowest in Canada, and our unemployment rate is the highest. Although we face many challenges from our disabilities, we also face barriers of attitude and design that

could be transformed.

We encourage HEU members, many of whom provide services and support to people with disabilities and who understand so well the triumphs and challenges that people with disabilities face every day, to see what is happening in your community, to celebrate this day, and to shine a light on the achievements of people with disabilities and the ways we can build a world where everyone belongs.

In Vancouver, we host an annual event on December 3, at the Roundhouse Community Centre. Vancouver Mayor

Gregor Robertson opens the event at 5:30p.m., followed by performances, dancing, a craft fair, food and art, created and performed by people with disabilities.

Everyone is welcome to come, and we hope those of you who live outside the Lower Mainland will take this opportunity to see what is happening in your community.

Please visit our website at www.vancouverdisabilitiesday.ca for more information.

JILL WEISS

Coordinator, City of Vancouver International Day of Persons with Disabilities Celebration

Follow us on Twitter!

WE'RE 'TWEETING' HEU NEWS, the work of our allies and friends, and links to interesting stories in the media about health care, social justice and workers' rights.

If you're not sure what on earth we're talking about, check our Twitter primer on our website. But the short explanation is that it's a social media tool used to send (and receive) very short messages (that sometimes include links to web pages and photos) to a group of "followers" and others who are interested in your message.

If you're on Twitter already, follow us at <@hospempunion>.

If you're not sure, check us out at <www.twitter.com/hospempunion>.

You can join at www.twitter.com and then follow us at <@hospempunion>.





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New funding scheme a big risk for public health care

Better care or just a bigger market for private clinics? And what does it mean for local hospitals?

This fall, the B.C. Liberal government began rolling out plans to fund a growing portion of health care services based on a controversial funding scheme that prices individual procedures within an environment of competition.

So far, those plans include nearly \$45 million targeted at emergency room care, medical procedures ranging from hip and joint procedures to colonoscopies, and MRIs.

Proponents of so-called patient-focused funding (PFF) say that linking funding to the number of procedures delivered at a set cost and encouraging competition between hospitals will increase efficiency and reduce waits.

But critics say the move towards competitive funding models in other jurisdictions has discouraged collaboration between health care providers, increased administrative costs, undermined regional hospitals and put care for patients with more complex needs at risk.

While funds committed to this model in the short term are relatively modest – \$80 million in 2010 rising to \$170 million next year – the B.C. Liberals' long-range plan is to allocate 20 per cent of eligible health care dollars through PFF by 2012.

That could amount to a staggering \$1.4 billion.

The funds will be funneled through a new bureaucracy – the BC Health Services Purchasing Organization –



mandated “to make decisions for the procurement of health care services using a funding model that will encourage improvement and create a competitive environment.”

Headed up by Dr. Les Vertesi, a noted proponent of health privatization and the brother-in-law to Premier Gordon Campbell, the purchasing body will determine what procedures and services will be funded and what price per patient.

Under the new plan, health authorities will be funded at the set price for each procedure or service delivered, rather than receiving a global amount based on population and health needs.

It's not clear how the BC Health Services Purchasing Organization will fulfill its mandate to create competition for these services. The initial announcements suggest allocations to health authorities will be based on individual needs and determined centrally.

But in other jurisdictions like the U.K. (see sidebar), similar funding models include competition between public hospitals and with private clinics for patient “business.”

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy is concerned that comprehensive care for British Columbians at their local hospital could be seriously compromised by competition for the high volume, lower cost procedures targeted by this funding scheme.

“Regional hospitals could be forced to abandon more complex patients and procedures if the only way they can secure funding is to pursue ‘high profit’ patients – those who are easy to treat and unlikely to experience complica-

tions,” says Darcy.

“And that’s only if they can ‘compete’ with larger metropolitan hospitals -- or with profit-driven private clinics that are unburdened by the need to provide more costly comprehensive health care.”

In fact, B.C.'s health minister Kevin Falcon has admitted that the funding system may force some patients to travel outside their communities to access care.

Darcy says competition for funding could stifle the collaboration that's needed to make sure all British Columbians have access to safer, faster, higher quality procedures and services.

“The danger is that hospitals won't share new innovations that give them a competitive edge in bidding on funding contracts,” says Darcy.

“Does that really make sense within a public health care system?”

In announcing the first round of funding under the new scheme, the health minister also told reporters that he had no problem with for-profit private clinics cashing in on these public health care dollars.

And in fact, the Fraser Health Authority issued a request for proposals in November inviting private clinics to bid on up to 7,000 general surgical procedures – more than its entire allocation of 6,800 procedures under the first round of funding.

“I think it's pretty clear who the big winners will be under this new funding model,” says Darcy. “And it's not the local hospital that patients depend on for comprehensive health care.”

MIKE OLD

Former UK health minister pans competitive funding model

BRITISH MP FRANK DOBSON is not keen on the B.C. government's plan to funnel one out of every five dollars of hospital funding through a competition-based patient focused funding scheme.

The former health secretary told HEU delegates in October that a similar scheme in his country was expensive and inefficient.

Dobson served as health secretary from 1997 to 1999 in Tony Blair's first Labour Party cabinet before he resigned his cabinet post to continue as a sitting member. He subsequently became alarmed at his Labour government's support for competitive funding in UK's National Health Service.

It's a system in which administrative costs exploded from four per cent of total expenditures to around 12 per cent or an extra \$13 billion a year.

Dobson said that's because its expensive to track patients and prepare bids.

“Preparing bids costs money. Lawyers and accountants have to be paid by both sides. Then the hospitals have to calculate and log and code how much each patient costs. Then they have to send off the bills.

Then the purchaser has to check the bills. Some bills are challenged – more lawyers and accountants,” said Dobson.

Dobson said that the competitive system has put local hospitals in Britain at risk.

“We need to remind the public to ask themselves ‘What is going to happen to my convenient local hospital?’ ‘Will it still be there?’” Dobson said.

“And even if it is, will it be able to provide all the range of treatments that local people need? What happens when the private sector cream-skims simpler, less risky, less costly operations on the healthy?”

Dobson says that some UK hospitals have been left so short of patients and money their futures have been threatened.

“Those of us who want to save our decent health care systems have a fight on our hands in both Britain and Canada,” Dobson told delegates.

“That's why you should be proud of your campaigns. Because without you, opposition to what is happening would be much less effective. So keep on fighting for what is right.”

Hear Dobson's speech at www.heu.org.



COFFEE BREAK

He said what?

When Premier Gordon Campbell announced in November that he was resigning, it marked an important anniversary here at the *Guardian*. It was ten years ago – in November 2000 – when we ran the now infamous interview with the premier-in-waiting.

Here are just some of the promises he made – and broke – in the November/December 2000 issue of the *Guardian*.

“I am not tearing up any agreements.”

In January 2002, the Campbell government passed Bill 29, voiding collective agreement provisions that led to the contracting out of thousands of health care workers jobs. You know the rest.

“I favour not-for-profit (long-term care beds)...”

In fact, the funding of new long-term care beds under the B.C. Liberals has occurred almost exclusively in the private sector using public-private partnerships (P3s). The premier also told *The Guardian* that he would maintain or increase the percentage of not-for-profit beds in the system which sat at about 70 per cent. Today, that percentage has actually fallen.

“...I'm for pay equity as a principle.”

For the mostly female workforce represented by HEU, pay equity gains negotiated in the 90s were largely erased by the 15 per cent pay cut unilaterally imposed by the Campbell Liberals in 2004 – or through contracting out.

“I say no.”

That's Gordon Campbell's answer when asked whether a 48-year old female health care worker needed to worry about privatization from a Gordon Campbell government. Enough said.

“Our job is to make (private clinics) redundant because the public clinics are doing so well.”

In fact, the number of private clinics has exploded under the B.C. Liberals and many of them receive public funding. And under the new competitive funding scheme announced earlier this year, it looks like private clinics have hit the jackpot (see page 3).

You can read the original interview at <http://tinyurl.com/2fjyndl>

Ambulance paramedics now in the FBA

More than 3,000 ambulance paramedics and emergency dispatchers – members of CUPE Local 873 – are now members of the multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association. The move results from the B.C. government transferring responsibility of the B.C. Ambulance Service to the Provincial Health Services Authority.

“I think it's fair to say that the transfer

was government's way of avoiding coming to a fair contract settlement with CUPE Local 873 members,” says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

“But I am really pleased that HEU and CUPE Local 873 members will have an opportunity to work together for better care for British Columbians.”

B.C.'s ambulance paramedics and HEU members have a long history together.

In the early 1960s, prior to the founding of a province-wide ambulance service, then HEU secretary-business manager Bill Black assisted ambulance attendants to join the National Union of Public Employees, which later became CUPE. And ten years ago, CUPE Local 873 and HEU launched a joint campaign against health care privatization where activists from both unions toured B.C. in an ambulance.

Know your rights

Shop stewards: rights and responsibilities

No matter what sector you work in all, HEU members are entitled to shop steward representation.

The terms of a shop steward system are negotiated during bargaining and agreed to by both the union and employers, but shop stewards are trained and appointed by the union.

In the facilities and community health collective agreements, there is a ratio of one shop steward for every 50 HEU members covered by the contract – with a minimum of two and a maximum of 25 stewards (*Art. 5.05 facilities, Art. 2.6 community health*).

Depending on the local, shop stewards may be elected by members or appointed by their local union executive.

Regardless of sector, HEU must provide each employer with a list of all shop stewards representing members at their work sites. In the Facilities Bargaining Association, the unions must also designate chief shop stewards to handle grievances. In smaller or remote locals, there may be a site representative, or a shop steward who covers multiple work locations.

In locals where more than one shop steward works in the same department, the employer is obligated to permit union leave for at least one of those shop stewards to conduct union business. However, the employer does have the right to ask the union to reschedule meetings or grievance

investigations if it interferes with operational requirements.

If a shop steward is part of the union/management committee (joint labour/management committee), then she or he is entitled to straight time wages to attend committee meetings.

With the exception of attending local union meetings which are voluntary, shop stewards do not lose pay for time off to conduct union business during their working hours. This includes meetings with the employer and the investigation of grievances.

Shop stewards and union activists are protected in the Health Services & Support Facilities Subsector collective agreement under *Art. 4 – No Discrimination*, which states in part:

“The Employer and the Association agree that there shall be no discrimination, interference, restriction or coercion exercised or practiced with respect to any employee for reason of membership or activity in the Union.”

Similar language exists for community health and community social services.

Community health

In the Health Services & Support Community Subsector Association's collective agreement, *Art. 2 – Union Recognition and Rights* outlines the union activity rights of members and shop stewards in its sector. Most of the provisions are the same as those in the facilities contract, but includes a spe-

cific clause on confidentiality (*Art. 10.8*) and another one on discipline.

“Where the Employer designate intends to interview a Steward for disciplinary purposes, the Steward shall have the right to consult with a Union Staff Representative and to have another steward or alternate present, providing that this does not result in an undue delay of the appropriate action being taken.” (*Art. 10.6*)

Community social services

The Community Social Services (CSS) collective agreement has similar language to the community health contract around union representation for shop stewards (*Art. 11.6*).

“A steward shall have the right to consult with a Staff Representative of the Union and to have a local Union Representative present at any interview with supervisory personnel which might be the basis of disciplinary action against the steward, providing that this does not result in an undue delay of the interview.”

The CSS contract differs from facilities and community health in that the number of shop stewards – also selected by the union – is not contingent on the number of HEU members at each work site. Instead, the number of stewards is mutually determined by the employer and union “taking into account both operational and geographic considerations.” (*Art. 3.6*)

<<newsbites>>

Poll shows public support for community social services

British Columbians support a strong network of community social services.

An Angus Reid poll released in early October shows 90 per cent of those surveyed believe these services make their communities safer, better places to live, and that preventative services

reduce the cost and societal burden of family breakdown and crisis intervention down the line.

And 65 per cent of respondents agreed

that current funding levels are too low.

The poll was sponsored by an affiliation of 40 provincial agencies and umbrella organizations concerned about inadequate funding levels throughout the sector.

Less than half of Canada's unemployed receive benefits

The Canadian Labour Congress is calling on Ottawa to extend benefits to Canada's unemployed and focus attention on job creation.

“The economy is slowing down, unemployment remains high

and workers are running out of Employment Insurance benefits while they look for new jobs,” says CLC president Ken Georgetti. “We have not recovered the ground lost since this economic crisis began two years ago.”

Georgetti was commenting on a Statistics Canada report showing that only 45 per cent of unemployed Canadians are receiving EI benefits. That is down from 50.3 per cent a year earlier.

“Too many Canadians remain unemployed and too few of them are receiving EI benefits,” he says. “Workers paid into the EI program in good faith and now it should be there for them when they need it.”



HEU celebrates Year of the Steward

Shop stewards are the BACKBONE of every HEU local. And building a strong shop steward structure through education, mentoring and leadership training is a KEY INGREDIENT in strengthening our locals.

In recognition of CUPE National's 2010 Year of the Shop Steward, HEU is saluting the invaluable contribution our dedicated shop stewards make at work sites across the province every single day.

Armed with negotiated contracts and advocacy skills, HEU shop stewards devote many hours of their own time to protect the rights of their union sisters and brothers in all sectors.

Seasoned activist Tracey Augustine, a care aide at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital and shop steward since 2002, says it's important members understand that they have the right to a shop steward – someone whose job it is to ensure an employer doesn't violate provisions in the collective agreement.

"If the employer starts walking all over the collective agreement, then we might as well not have a collective agreement," says Augustine, adding that "what's most satisfying is when we can help a member resolve a conflict before it goes to a grievance procedure."

Diane Tomei, a pharmacy technician at Burnaby General Hospital since

2004 and a newly trained shop steward, agrees, "There's a lot of personal satisfaction in being able to help someone and show someone that you do have rights, and you don't have to be trampled on by the employer."

The steward's "bible"

The most powerful tool HEU members have is their collective agreement. It covers all areas of a member's working life – wages, hours of work, safety, medical and dental benefits, and more. It protects workers from unfair treatment and discrimination. And it is a living document that's subject to interpretation.

"It's my night-time reading," laughs Tomei. "People need to know their rights. I know the value of the union. My father was in a union and I saw the benefits of it growing up."

Whether she's asking her peers a contract question or whether the question is being asked of her as a steward, Tomei says it all boils down to the same thing: "What does the collective agreement say?"

Interpreting the collective agreement is its own challenge. But reading it and understanding the contract language is an invaluable and empowering resource for every HEU member, says Tomei, who recently completed the union's Pilot Introductory Shop Steward program.

"You can't just rely on stewards to do your homework for you," she says. "You have to help yourself as well, if you think there's an injustice... You can't sit back and wait for things to happen. You've got to be proactive."

Over the years, HEU has built a solid, multi-level steward educational program that also includes OH&S and leadership training. The union invests substantial resources through educational workshops with mentoring opportunities to give members the nec-

essary tools to become confident stewards at their work sites.

Since 2006, HEU has trained about 3,600 members and boosted the union's shop steward network by 60 per cent.

Now a mentor herself, Augustine says she's taken every HEU shop steward course available, and credits her local executive for taking her under their wing in the early days.

She stresses the importance of mentoring new stewards so they can apply what they've learned in training on the shop floor. Attending face-to-face meetings with employers is a good place to start, she says.

"I tell the manager that the member is in training and just there to observe," explains Augustine. "It makes it less scary and overwhelming when the member sees what I do."

Where do we go from here?

As many seasoned activists retire in the coming years, it's vital that new activists carry the torch – ideally from diverse job families.

"We need more shop stewards," says Tomei. "It gives the local executive a better understanding of the issues in different departments, if we have shop stewards from various occupational groups."

A good shop steward, Augustine says, is somebody who can listen to members' complaints and decipher the contract to find out if it was violated. "You have to be empathetic, and willing to stand up for members, especially if members are too intimidated to stand up for themselves."

And to be effective, Augustine adds, it's imperative that stewards be professional when dealing with employers.

"To meet with the employer, you need to know the collective agreement, listen to the employer and not lose your temper, even though you disagree with the employer. You need to be respectful, yet firm."

Tomei agrees, adding that an efficient shop steward needs to have a healthy balance of contract knowledge and people skills.

Given the current restructuring in B.C.'s health care system, some HEU members may not know who to contact should they need union representation. The first step is to call your local executive and they will direct you to the appropriate supports.

BRENDA WHITEHALL



"What's most satisfying is when we can help a member resolve a conflict before it goes to a grievance procedure." Tracey Augustine



"If you think there's an injustice you can't sit back and wait for things to happen. You've got to be proactive." Diane Tomei

Interested in HEU steward training?

COURSES INCLUDE:

Introductory Shop Steward

Pilot Introductory Shop Steward
(includes mentoring)

Know & Enforce Your Rights
(Intermediate Shop Steward)

Chief Shop Steward

Advanced Shop Steward

Union Activism

Members who have received HEU training may also be eligible to apply for courses through the B.C. Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress.

For more information, contact your local executive.

Federal student debt now surpasses \$15 billion

Tuition fees are currently the single largest expense for most students, and are increasing far faster than inflation. Statistics Canada reports that more than 90 per cent of university students paid higher tuition fees this fall.

This follows the news that the government expects federal student debt to surpass \$15 billion.

"Canada is on the verge of bankrupting a generation," said Canadian Federation of Students chair David Molenhuis.

"A lack of government investment has left students and their families footing

the bill for Canada's universities."

According to the report, tuition fees rose by four per cent for undergraduates to an average of \$5,138. Graduate students faced larger increases, with tuition fees rising by 6.6 per cent to an average of \$5,182. By comparison, inflation was only 1.8 per cent in the 12 months to July 2010. (CAUT/CALM)

British Columbians support higher CPP benefits

Union demands to raise Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefits for retired

workers are backed by 75 per cent of British Columbians.

A Viewpoints Research opinion survey, commissioned by CUPE, shows that three out of four respondents would support federal and provincial governments increasing CPP benefits. Only 20 per cent were opposed.

CPP is considered by many experts to be the most cost-effective, secure way to help solve the retirement income crisis.

CUPE National president Paul Moist says more than 11 million Canadians do not have workplace pension plans, and more and more seniors are working low-wage jobs to make ends meet.

Mayors call for \$10 an hour minimum wage

Not only does B.C. have the highest child poverty rate in Canada, it now has the lowest minimum wage.

Every other province has boosted its minimum wage in the last year, but B.C.'s \$8 an hour minimum wage has not been increased since 2001.

In early October, 21 mayors from all parts of the province called on B.C.'s Liberal government to raise the minimum wage to \$10 an hour and scrap the \$6 an hour "training wage."

"Other provinces have made the connection between raising the minimum wage and combating poverty. We need to make the same connec-



One year later, no deal in sight for CSS

It's been more than a year since workers in the community social services sector have been at the bargaining table. But at press time, no agreement had been reached with the Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA).

Thus far, employer representatives have been unwilling to consider any type of compensation increase, even though community social services workers are among the lowest paid employees in the public sector.

For example, the starting wage rate for a residence worker in 2002 was \$16.83 per hour. Eight years later, in 2010, that rate has fallen to \$15.54. And workers have not been able to recover the cuts to sick time entitlements taken in 2004 – which only pay 80 per cent of time missed due to illness.

Bargaining is scheduled to resume in December. In the meantime, union representatives have been meeting with CSSEA to negotiate “global orders,” which set the overall ground rules required in the event of a labour dispute.

Against this backdrop, disability advocates and family members are speaking out against cost-cutting initiatives and “services redesign” by Community Living BC, which have already forced several group homes closures and worker layoffs.

BC Family Net Society – a provincial network of family members that advocates for children, youth and adults with special needs – has appealed to B.C.'s Minister of Housing and Social Development to stop the forced relocation of residents with developmental

disabilities to less costly home-sharing arrangements.

“While options like home sharing work for some, they are not appropriate for everyone and the lack of independent monitoring and oversight raises a number of serious concerns about risk to health and safety,” they said

in a letter to Minister Kevin Krueger. “Recruitment of family care homes needs careful assessment and recognition on the caregiver’s part of the incredible commitment they will be undertaking.” Moms on the Move, another family group, is expressing similar opposition to the continuing closure of residential group homes and has condemned a series of ads posted on Craigslist, advertising for anyone willing to share their home with one or more adults with developmental disabilities.

“Unlike professionally staffed group homes, which must be licensed, inspected and subjected to independent oversight,” say Moms, “home share contractors are not subject to any independent oversight and the potential for abuse is enormous.”

Most recently, family groups and other advocates (including unions) have been working together in a broad coalition to deal with mounting concerns about the lack of adequate resources and residential options available to people with special needs.

In late October, a community forum sponsored by coalition partners in Vancouver drew about 200 people to discuss the issues and develop future actions. At press time, another forum was being planned for Victoria.



The starting wage rate for a residence worker in 2002 was \$16.83 per hour. Eight years later, in 2010, that rate has fallen to \$15.54.

<<newsbites>>

tion here in B.C.,” says B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair.

St. Paul's Hospital staying put – for now

In June, Vancouver's West End community and the Save St. Paul's Coalition gave a simultaneous sigh of relief when the Ministry of Health announced its decision to keep St. Paul's Hospital at its current Burrard Street location, and to invest the dollars needed to upgrade and renovate the aging infrastructure.

Since 2004, the BC Liberals have spent about \$800,000 a



year – of taxpayer money – to maintain a piece of land in False Creek, where they had planned to build a new health care facility.

Their vision was to downgrade the century-old St. Paul's hospital to a community health care centre, and to construct a massive, full-service hospital – with an estimated price tag of one-billion dollars – on the Station Street

property, owned by the non-profit Vancouver Esperanza Society.

For now, the government will continue to pay the property taxes on behalf of the Society on the condition that Providence Health Care (which operates St. Paul's Hospital) has first dibs on purchasing that land should they decide to build a health care structure on that site in the future.

Critics argue that the estimated five-million dollars the B.C. government has spent on reserving that land could have been put toward the renovations that St. Paul's Hospital

supporters had been proposing for years.

Concrete plans and timelines for revitalizing St. Paul's have not been laid out, but the facility's upgraded emergency ward – which took about three years and \$14.7-million to complete – was unveiled in July.

Union victory at Walmart

The highest court in Saskatchewan has upheld a decision to certify a union at a Walmart in Weyburn, Saskatchewan.

In a unanimous decision

the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal upheld the certification of a UFCW Canada Local 1400 bargaining unit at the Weyburn store. The certification had originally been issued by the Saskatchewan Labour Board in December 2008.

Walmart had successfully challenged that certificate in a lower court but that court's decision was struck down by the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, and the store's union certification upheld.

“This is a victory for workers rights and the principle that no company is above the law,” said Norm Neault,



KEN ROBINSON

PRESIDENT'S DESK

There's hope on the horizon

This year's convention had to be one of our best ever. After five days of lively debate and plenty of networking, I think everyone headed home with something positive – whether it came from our plenary discussions, social evenings or from our

guest speakers, who all clearly connected with our membership.

For myself personally, it was an honour to be elected to a second term as your President and be able to continue serving on our Provincial Executive. With the adoption of our strategic directions document (*see page 10*) we're ready to roll up our sleeves and take on the task of strengthening our locals and our union, from the ground up.

I want to encourage you to take the time to connect with members of your local executive, attend local meetings if you can, and let us know the things that are most important to you as an HEU member.

On the larger political front, I must comment on some of the wilder politics that have unfolded in B.C. in recent weeks. During convention week, it was

It's hard to imagine how this government can ever earn back the trust. What B.C. needs is a major change in direction.

also interesting to see Premier Campbell desperately try to revive his rock-bottom popularity ratings with a televised address and his unexpected announcement of a 15 per cent tax reduction.

But it didn't work – which accounts for his sudden reversal just three weeks later.

And I'm sure most members were relieved by Campbell's surprise resignation shortly after convention. While it appears the HST lie was largely responsible for his dismal popularity ratings with most British Columbians – for HEU members the HST was just another broken promise that began

when he ripped up our collective agreement and launched a massive privatization agenda in health care.

We've experienced first-hand the most damaging aspects of his government's policies in our hospitals and seniors' care homes. We've struggled for almost a decade with escalating workloads and huge stress – all the while doing everything we possibly can, in whatever job we're in, to keep providing patients and residents good, quality care.

But despite all the problems we are dealing with as health care workers I believe there is hope on the horizon. It may have taken almost a decade for British Columbians to grasp just how destructive Campbell's agenda has been for the province, but the public is no longer willing to be led by blind trust.

That trust has been broken. And it's hard to imagine how this government can ever earn it back. What B.C. needs is a major change in direction.

As a progressive, social justice union we will continue to advocate for the things that matter most to our members and our communities. Decent jobs with fair wages. A poverty reduction plan. More funding for public health care, schools, community social services, the arts. And an end to the “Robin Hood in reverse” policies of the last decade that have widened the gap between rich and poor.

Putting the squeeze on seniors

The HUMAN COSTS of recent fee hikes in province's long-term care homes

The B.C. government's fee increases for people living in long-term care facilities is hurting residents and family members.

That's the bottom line of a survey, "Standards of Respect: the Human Cost of Residential Care Fee Increases in British Columbia", commissioned by the Hospital Employees' Union earlier this year. It found that the new rates left people facing untenable financial and personal burdens.

Report author Megan McKinney interviewed 15 residents and family members from across B.C. Their testimonies demonstrate not only the financial but the human cost of the government's structural adjustment of residential care fees.

The new structure – which hiked fees effective January 1, 2010 and will raise them again on New Year's Day 2011 – moved from a per diem calculation to a

of the residential fee increases. Residents and family members report making difficult personal choices and sacrifices, accompanied by heightened anxiety, chronic sleeplessness and depression.

One young mother in care reports foregoing treatment for her own dental emergency so that her daughter could see a dentist. Another resident can no longer afford to see a physiotherapist despite a clear medical need for treatment.

And some seniors, together for decades but with one partner now in care, have made the heart-breaking decision to legally separate in order to protect each person's individual financial situation.

Residents also report that while costs are rising, there has been a steady decline in the quality of care and service provided in facilities. They voice concerns about inedible or inadequate food, cutbacks in staff hours or layoffs leading to less care per resident per day, and services such as occupational therapy and recreation, once included in the cost of care, no longer being available.

This decline in facility provisions means that people are paying out-of-pocket for everything from their own food or incontinence pads to private nurses in order to ensure their health care needs are met.

Finally, the report found that few knew there was a hardship review process. That lack of knowledge extended to health authorities and to the Ministry of Health Services. When information about the hardship review was unearthed, the process proved to be onerous and complicated.

The report also points out that although the government claims additional revenue generated by the fee hikes will be redirected back into residential care, "there has been no evidence of increased care levels in the facilities of those who were contacted for the survey."

"Furthermore, the government has been vague on how or where this revenue increase will be applied, so whether or not any of the residents we spoke to can expect positive changes in their care in return for the huge jump in their fees remains to be seen."

HEU recently presented the report's findings to B.C. Ombudsperson Kim Carter who has shown a keen interest in the state of seniors' care in the province.

In August 2008, she launched a far-reaching and



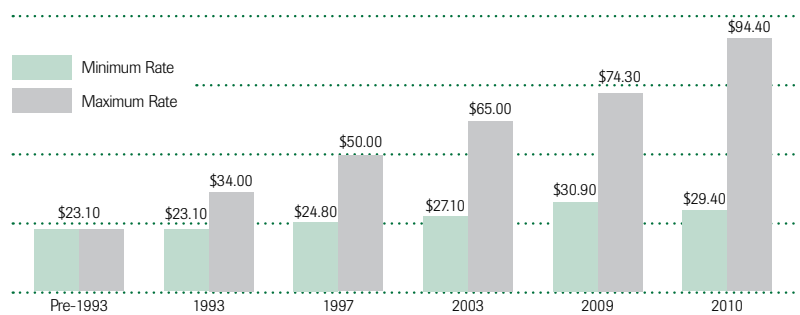
comprehensive systemic investigation into seniors' care issues in B.C.

Carter issued "The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 1)" in December 2009. It contained 10 recommendations to government including a call for the formation of resident and family councils supported by legislation, a comprehensive website about B.C.'s residential care facilities, and a genuine residents' bill of rights. Government has yet to act on most of the recommendations.

Carter's highly anticipated final report is expected to be released in the spring of 2011.

MARGI BLAMEY

Residential Care Rate Increases since 1993



In this last round of fee changes, the highest rate increase was the single largest experienced by residents since 1993 with an increase of 30 per cent in just one year, and an increase of 93 per cent since 2001. The lowest income bracket did go down slightly (though not to the levels they were before this government raised them in 2003).

From Ministry of Health Services' Residential Care Rate Structure published October 8, 2009

standardized, income-tested, monthly payment model.

Now, all residents are expected to pay 80 per cent of their after-tax income in residential fees and have a minimum of \$275 a month left over for personal expenses.

As a result, 75 per cent of residents in care saw their fees increase, in many cases substantially.

The leftover personal amount of \$275 is expected to pay for a growing list of goods and services no longer included in the facility fees or covered by Medicare such as: medical equipment (wheelchairs and hearing aids); appointments with dentists, optometrists, physiotherapists and other specialists; telephone, cable, and internet fees; and hygiene products, clothing, and other personal necessities.

"Standards of Respect" also reveals the human cost

What they said...

"My mother worked all her life... Squeezing every last penny from her is unconscionable."

"Mother is lucky she has children to help her out. I know some who do not, and I don't know how they handle it."

"There seems to be an assumption that seniors are sitting on an asset that they can draw from, like a house, but my mom is an example of someone who didn't own a home."

"I have bills to pay, my family is not all grown up. I have a teenage daughter – how will I pay for college?"

"We haven't told Dad about the separation." The family worries that he would be heartbroken.

"Everyone is afraid to say anything. This system of care creates fear in old folks and their families because they're worried it's going to get worse for them if they complain."

the president of Local 1400. "Walmart has done everything it could to prevent the workers from getting a collective agreement. It has even prevented us from communicating with the workers at the store."

The Court of Appeal's ruling is the latest chapter in a legal process Walmart has dragged out since 2004, when Local 1400 first applied to represent the Weyburn workers.

It was the second time in a week the courts have ruled against Walmart. Just two days prior to the Saskatchewan ruling, the Quebec Superior Court

upheld an arbitrator's decision that Walmart had acted illegally when it shut a store in Jonquiere shortly after workers there formed a union.

Meanwhile, UFCW Canada members at a Walmart in Gatineau, Quebec recently achieved a first contract. UFCW Canada members at a store in Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec, also have a contract in place.

In Saskatchewan, UFCW Canada Local 1400 also has applications pending before the labour board for Walmart stores in Moose Jaw and North Battleford. (UFCW/CALM)

How do we rate our health care system?

Canadians' confidence in our universal, publicly-funded health care system is improving according to the findings of a national survey conducted by the Health Council of Canada and released November 19.

Overall, our views are still consistent with what the Romanow Commission heard in 2002. We are proud of medicare, consider it an important part of our national identity and "are satisfied with – and confident in – the health care system,"

the medical care we receive and our ability to afford care when needed.

There is definitely room for improvement. In particular, Canadians cite better and more access to primary health care in order to avoid unnecessary use of hospital emergency departments; timely and accurate information sharing and coordination between physicians and specialists; and better drug coverage under a national pharmaceuticals strategy.

Like more and more organizations, the health council is seeking to engage the



public and wants to hear from you. Canadians are invited to read the report online at www.healthcouncil-canada.ca and give feedback through its website blog or via its Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Jobs, justice, climate: Building a green economy for B.C.

Environmentalists and unions haven't always seen eye-to-eye. And on some issues, they still don't. But that hasn't stopped activists on both sides of the "jobs versus ecology" debate from seeking out – and finding – common ground.

It was in that spirit, of working together on issues of mutual concern, that HEU members joined fellow trade unionists and environmentalists at a landmark conference in mid-September – "Jobs, Justice, Climate: Building a Green Economy for B.C."

Supported by the Columbia Institute, the conference involved an impressive 25 union and environmental organizations. And it provided both movements with an historic opportunity to talk about how B.C. can boost the economy, create jobs and save the planet – all at the same time.

At the opening public forum, which drew about 300 people into the ballroom of Vancouver's Hyatt Regency Hotel, keynote speaker David Foster put it this way: "We reject the old stereotype that

"We reject the old stereotype that you have to balance a trade-off between jobs and the environment. It's not good jobs or a clean environment. It's both or neither."

you have to balance a trade-off between jobs and the environment. It's not good jobs or a clean environment. It's both or neither."

Foster is the executive director for the U.S.-based Blue Green Alliance, a partnership of unions and environmental groups dedicated to expanding green jobs in a green economy.

The best way out of a global recession, he told his audience, is building a clean energy economy. Not only will it help solve an unemployment crisis "that is savaging so many families", it is the best way to create long-term, sustainable economic growth.

So what does that mean in practical terms? It means doing the work that needs to be done to fight climate change, which would create new jobs while stabilizing and growing the economy.

One of the most refreshing things about the conference was its focus on real, common sense solutions.

For example, by making residential and commercial buildings energy-efficient, we can create thousands of new jobs in the construction industry and pay for the work with long-term energy savings.

By adopting higher fuel-efficiency standards in the auto industry, we can shift direction and instead of producing more gas-guzzling vehicles, we can manufacture the electric and hybrid vehicles needed to reduce auto emissions, which would put automakers back to work.

By reviving freight rail, which is one of the cleanest ways to move products across the country, we could employ thousands of people to repair and build rail infrastructure.

"The clean energy economy can solve our unemployment problem," says Foster. "But not

if we hold fast to yesterday's energy production, consumption and distribution."

To those who say we just can't afford a green economy, it will cost too much money, it will take too much regulation and it will drive businesses out of business, he says, "what's driving businesses out of business is not knowing whether or not we're going to continue down the path of a fossil-fuel economy in a world of finite fossil-fuel supplies which grow ever more expensive and uncertain.

"What business can't afford is not knowing whether oil is going to be \$30 a barrel or \$160 a barrel."

Foster also says that by allowing other countries to take the lead in renewable and energy-efficient technologies, we are missing a critical opportunity to make clean-energy industries the leading economic sector in the 21st century.

But that can't happen if government refuses to make the education and training investment required to skill the workforce needed to "re-engineer and skill up our clean-energy future."

"A country that bleeds its educational system can't expect to compete in the 21st century economy," he says. "Let's invest in our kids again. Productivity has its roots in innovation and education."

While it's not clear how organizations will move forward in B.C., the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union has joined with Greenpeace to support the environmental group's new report,

"What's driving businesses out of business is not knowing whether or not we're going to continue down the path of a fossil-fuel economy in a world of finite fossil fuel supplies."



Building a Green Economy in the Boreal Forest, which lays out a vision for development that stimulates Ontario's forest industry, creates jobs and preserves the ecological value of Canada's boreal forest.

As B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair told participants, "We can't put this off to the next generation." And he emphasized that success will not only come from a sound and shared vision for the future, but from a collective commitment to take action on common goals.

PATTY GIBSON

GREENING THE UNION

BILLED AS "OUR GREENEST CONVENTION EVER", HEU'S 27TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION enshrined "the development of a green agenda for the union" in its strategic directions plan for the next two years.

And it resolved to actively oppose oil pipeline development, water privatization, future coalbed methane gas drilling

Specifically, HEU will:

- Build alliances on green issues within the labour and environmental community
- Identify campaigns and activities that link privatization, health and safety, restructuring, green jobs and other relevant issues to a green agenda for health care
- Lobby governments to stop the development

of the proposed Enbridge pipeline which would carry crude from Alberta's oilsands to a Kitimat port for transfer to tankers

- Lobby governments to make the moratorium on coalbed methane gas drilling permanent in the "sacred headwaters" – where the Skeena, Nass and Stikine rivers converge
- Campaign to protect access to water as a human right and as a public asset including the rejection of the public-private partnership (P3) model for delivery of water services
- Join CUPE, the Council of Canadians and others in the campaign for a national water policy that creates national clean drinking water standards, secures federal funding to upgrade public water utilities, and bans bulk water exports.

Convention 2010 sets direction for the next two years



KEN ROBINSON

These challenging times also create opportunities. And what has become very clear for workers is that the difference between a good job, with better wages, decent benefits, more job security and safer working conditions, is a union job. That's why nothing gives me more satisfaction than when a group of workers choose HEU to represent them.



JUDY DARCY

The BC Liberals have opened up seniors' care to the market and rewritten the rules to help their corporate friends. It's no longer a question about whether it's OK for corporations to profit from seniors' care – but rather about how much they can make. Government's answer? "The sky is the limit."



DONISA BERNARDO

We trained more than 1,200 members of the Facilities Bargaining Association, the majority being HEU members who wanted to upgrade in their current classification or re-train for another position in the FBA. The success of this educational program allowed us to achieve another \$1.25 million at the bargaining table for the 2010 to 2012 facilities collective agreement.

IT WAS THE BIGGEST, "greenest" convention in HEU's 65-year history.

It brought together more than 600 delegates from all parts of the province to elect a new Provincial Executive, engage in vigorous debate, and adopt a series of resolutions and constitutional amendments – along with a new strategic directions plan – to guide the union over the next two years.

Convention planners also made every effort to minimize the gathering's environmental footprint, and for the first time banned the use of bottled water.

During the course of the five-day convention, delegates passed resolutions directing the union to advocate for funding for assistive devices and day programs for people with disabilities, safer staffing levels for LPNs and care aides in long-term care, affordable summer child care programs for older children, and improved benefits for retired workers.

Delegates also directed the union to campaign against insurance company policies that deny coverage to persons living with HIV/AIDS and other pre-existing health conditions.

And in one of the most emotional debates on the plenary floor, delegates adopted a resolution to promote anti-bullying day.

Internally, it was agreed that HEU will expand its policies on reimbursing members who require dependant care to participate in union activities, and take action to address and resolve stewards' workload issues.

But it wasn't all business. HEU's Equity Night was the most successful to date, with hundreds of members attending to celebrate the union's diversity and commitment to equality.

And the Women's Gathering – an HEU tradition – was standing room only to hear speakers link economic equality and social justice to ending violence against women in our society.

Throughout the convention, delegates also heard from several guest speakers who thanked HEU members for their continuing efforts to defend public health for all British Columbians.

"When I look at all of you, I feel a great deal of hope," B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair told the convention gathering.

"Why? Because you are fighting every day, not only for respect for health care workers, but for the right of every citizen to have equal access to health care."

Sinclair also spoke to the overriding importance of solidarity within the labour movement, condemning the B.C. Nurses' Union raid on HEU and other unions last year.

"Let me say loudly today – the Federation of Labour stands squarely with the HEU and continues our call to the BCNU to cease all raiding activities and join with us to fight the real battles organizing new workers and building a strong public health care system for all."

Vancouver and District Labour Council president Bill Saunders commended HEU for its progressive approach on labour issues over the years.

"I am particularly impressed by your commitment to build a stronger union by strengthening your locals," he said. "This is exactly the right direction to take to build a powerful, meaningful organization that not only defends its members' rights, but builds a more just society in our communities."

CUPE National president Paul Moist and CUPE National secretary-treasurer Claude Généreux both received a warm welcome from HEU delegates, as did CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill, who also chaired the P.E. elections.

Moist congratulated members for their work on the

union's Stand UP for Seniors Care and Living Wage campaigns, and Généreux pledged continued support for HEU campaigns in the future saying, "Your struggles, whether it's against privatization, contracting out or the HST, are shared by CUPE sisters and brothers across Canada."

One of the most powerful convention speeches came from Council of Canadians' national chairperson Maude Barlow, who brought home the challenges Canadians face on human rights issues, water privatization, new trade agreement, and health care.

And Frank Dobson painted an enlightening picture of how Britain is systematically unraveling their public health care services (*see page 3*).

No convention would be complete without recognizing some of the outstanding campaigns undertaken by HEU members during the past two years. This year's convention gavel went to the Kamloops-Thompson local for their work against the contracting out of hospital security at Royal Inland Hospital.

Abbotsford, Chilliwack Amalgamated, Hope and Mission locals all received plaques in recognition of their efforts to stop the further contracting out of food services in the eastern Fraser Valley.

The union's awards banquet also saw HEU community social services member Marilyn Rust receive the Mary LaPlante Sisterhood award and Vicki Poburn receive the HEU disAbility Rights Award.

"When I look at all of you, I feel a great deal of hope. Why? Because you are fighting every day, not only for respect for health care workers, but for the right of every citizen to have equal access to health care."

NDP leader salutes HEU members

Here are some excerpts from Carole James' speech to delegates.



"From the beginning of life through to the end of life **HEU members are there**. Twenty-four hours a day. Seven days a week."

"We owe you our **gratitude**, not only for the compassionate care you provide but for your **courage** to stand up for what's right."

"You were one of the **first to face** the real BC Liberal agenda when they brought in *Bill 29* – an attack on health care workers and an affront to all British Columbians."

"You didn't lie down. You **fought** back."

"New Democrats were **proud** to stand with you every step of the way. And one of my first orders of business as premier will be to eliminate all remaining provisions of *Bill 29*."

"If we want to grow our economy, if we want to grow investment and jobs in this province, governments **must invest** in public health care."

"Not private care. **Public care**."

"You **can count** on a New Democrat government to do that."

WATCH CONVENTION SPEECHES ON THE UNION'S WEBSITE AT WWW.HEU.ORG

Delegates attending HEU's 27th biennial convention **OVERWHELMINGLY ADOPTED** the Provincial Executive's five-point plan to **REVITALIZE THE UNION.**

Our members, our

HOW DO WE fully realize the strength our members bring to the union? How do we support members to become more involved? How do we make HEU locals stronger and more effective?

Those questions were front and centre of a dynamic discussion during this year's convention, which helped determine the principle focus for the union's work over the next two years.

This was the second time HEU's Provincial Executive provided delegates with a strategic action paper ahead of time to encourage an open exchange of ideas on the convention floor about the union's future directions.

This year's paper built on the achievements of the 2008 plan. And it put member involvement at the heart of HEU's strategic directions for 2010-2012.

1 BUILDING STRONGER LOCALS

Strong locals and member involvement are central to all the work the union does. On any given day, local executives and activists are hard at work resolving members' problems in the workplace and encouraging members to engage in union activities and campaigns.

Yet many local leaders are finding it difficult to increase member participation. There are a lot of reasons for this, but many come down to the challenges our members face at work and at home.

Members work different shifts. They may work at different sites. They may hold two or more jobs. Workloads are already heavy and getting heavier. Family responsibilities, health concerns, or meeting the needs of an aging parent may also play a role. And sometimes members may not realize they're needed.

These problems aren't unique to HEU. But by making member engagement and local building a top priority, we can strengthen the union at all levels.

Over the next two years, HEU will:

- develop orientation and training tools to support meaningful connections with new members
- strengthen union education program for stewards and local executives
- create new ways to involve members and revitalize local meetings
- build stronger steward networks
- boost on-the-ground organizing around health and safety issues
- support young workers to organize on common issues and network with one another
- ensure that restructuring of services doesn't undermine the strength of our locals.

2 BUILDING UNITY BETWEEN SECTORS

Ten years ago, most HEU members worked under the province-wide facilities agreement. Some worked under agreements in the community health or community social services sectors.

But that's changed as a result of contracting out, de-accreditation and public-private partnerships. Now, one out of every five HEU members is no longer covered under a public-sector agreement.

Every year, HEU successfully organizes hundreds of new members who are covered by independent contracts and who are forced to negotiate in a more hostile bargaining environment.

Our challenge as a union is to build greater unity among members working in all our different sectors and to ensure their strong participation across the union.

Over the next two years, HEU will:

- actively support newly formed locals in HEU's independent sector
- hold a bargaining conference in 2011 for members covered by independent contracts to develop common goals for bargaining
- promote representation by all HEU sectors in the union's leadership and activities.

3 BUILDING STRENGTH IN OUR HEALTH CARE TEAM

HEU members understand that delivering quality care depends on a well-functioning team. At the same time, members strongly identify with their own role within the team and take a lot of pride in their skills, experience and training.

That's why HEU has worked hard to advocate for and promote specific professional/occupational concerns while building unity across the entire team in every sector.

Over the next two years, HEU will:

- provide occupational subcommittees with training, support and a clear mandate
- execute a new public education campaign on members' diverse roles in delivering quality care
- identify issues and improve communications with members based on their occupation
- advocate for better utilization of the health care team through the Joint Engagement Committee
- strengthen our LPN network at all levels
- expand outreach to care aides in all sectors
- monitor the impact of regulatory and professional practice changes and advocate for measures to protect members' ability to fully participate in their chosen occupation.



WHO WE ARE

- We are a **DIVERSE** and democratic union.
- We actively **ENFORCE** our collective rights.
- We are committed to building an economically and socially **JUST SOCIETY.**
- We are committed to **PEACE** and **PROSPERITY** and recognize that our struggles are fundamentally linked to **WORKERS' STRUGGLES** around the world.

new delegates

strength

4 BUILDING STRENGTH IN OUR DIVERSITY

HEU's strength is in our diversity – whether it is based on occupation, sector, gender, ethnicity, gender identification, sexual orientation or different physical and mental abilities.

As a leader in addressing equity issues in the workplace and promoting the full participation of a diverse membership in our union, we are also better equipped to meet the needs of patients, residents and clients who reflect that same diversity.

Over the next two years, HEU will:

- provide equity standing committee members with training and leadership development
- consult widely on how to promote equity throughout HEU
- expand education for, and outreach to, members of equity-seeking groups while expanding union education on equity issues for all members and staff
- mentor leaders and activists from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

5 BUILDING IN THE COMMUNITY

HEU members are active in the life of their communities. It's an important way to reach out to union members beyond the workplace. And just as important, strengthening our alliances in the community is critical if we are to succeed in our fight for decent jobs, better health care, and the other services that contribute to healthy communities.

Over the next two years HEU will:

- connect with members and allies to revitalize our campaigns against health cuts and privatization
- build the union's campaign on seniors' issues
- support the campaign for living wages for both members of the union and others in the community
- develop a green agenda for the union and build alliances on green issues
- renew our solidarity with allies in the community and the labour movement.

Together, these five directions provide a clear focus for the union and its work over the next two years.

All are aimed at energizing our membership, expanding our capacity to protect jobs, services and the quality of work life for our members; equipping locals with the tools and training they need to represent members effectively, and protecting British Columbians' access to quality public health care.

THIS WORKS!

CONVENTION DELEGATES CONTRIBUTED SCORES OF IDEAS ON HOW TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THESE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS. MAYBE YOU'VE GOT SOME IDEAS AS WELL! EMAIL THEM TO THISWORKS@HEU.ORG AND WATCH THE WEBSITE FOR OUR THISWORKS! FEATURE.

ALMOST ONE-THIRD of the members attending this year's biennial convention were first-time delegates. We asked some of them about their convention experiences, what they learned and what they want to take back to their locals.

LEONA CLARK, LPN, *Chetwynd Regional Hospital (NHA)*



"I learned that we have a lot of things in common and we are supported. We aren't just seven or eight LPNs in Chetwynd...We are LPNs in a national union with more than 600,000 members. Hearing that from [CUPE National president] Paul Moist instilled a lot of strength and pride. I know we have someone to fight alongside us – CUPE. That was empowering to learn. Now, when I speak to any member, I hope I can deliver that message of pride, protection and strength."

DON PHELPS, care aide, *Sunset Lodge (VIHA)*



"Before I came to convention, the union was just a voice in bargaining and I never paid much attention. But being here, I have found there's so much more to HEU and it's motivated me to become more involved as an activist. HEU values are my values. The convention has filled me with pride for my union and what our union stands for. I am grateful."

KAREN MATYCHUK, housekeeping aide, *Sodexo at Royal Columbian Hospital (IHA)*



"My secretary-treasurer was doing everything on her own. I felt that she needed someone beside her to back her up, so I got involved. What's changed for me here is my attitude and how I feel. It's not just us two, it's all of us together... I'm going to tell [members] how much they are supported, it's not just us on our own."

TALITHA DEKKER, accounts receivable clerk, *Royal Inland Hospital (SSO/IHA)*



"It's all been really informative. I've learned things I knew nothing about. It's been great to see the passion in our debates, but also to see the thoughtfulness delegates have when they vote. They vote from their heart, but they also vote for the good of the whole union. It's great to be here – whether you're in patient care, maintenance, clerical – we're all in the same union. The conference brought that out. We're all one union."

JENNIFER DICK, LPN, *Well-Being at Dufferin Care*



"I learned a lot and got some good ideas on how to build the local – things we can put in place to build knowledge. With contract-flipping, it's hard to keep continuity; building our locals has been really hard, and bargaining's been challenging... All the speakers were great. They all have a lot of passion and that was really inspiring."

TERESITA DECHAVEZ, *Aramark at Burnaby Hospital (FHA)*



"As a housekeeper, I am glad we are fighting for a living wage. Everybody needs to be united in order to be strong and to reach our goals. Coming to convention, I now have a realistic understanding of the union's achievements and I am very proud to be a member. As a chairperson and shop steward, I want to see new members get more information about the union and how it works."

SUSAN BURBANK, care aide, *Olive Devaud Residence (VCHA)*



"Now HEU feels like family. It's all been so emotional. I feel honoured to be here. We've worked hard. We've learned from each other and I want to pass the baton onto others in my local. I want to be a catalyst for change, and I'm going to tell members back home 'you've got to get involved. We need more people. Come and join us.'"

TASHA WHENHAM, community support worker, *Kardel Consulting (VIHA)*



"What stands out for me is the passion and dedication I've seen from both senior and new delegates. It's been great to see everybody coming together and participating for the common cause of our union and health care. I've learned that the issues are much bigger than you realize and that we do have support for our common goals and what we're fighting for. The band was great!"

Introducing the Provincial Executive

A major order of business at every convention is electing HEU's Provincial Executive. These 20 women and men – together with secretary-business manager Judy Darcy – are charged with carrying out the wishes of convention and leading the union over the next two years.

KEN ROBINSON *president*

Local: Kelowna General (Kelowna General Hospital) *diet technician/food services supervisor*

Beginning his second term as HEU president, Ken has also served four other terms on the P.E. including 1st and 3rd vice-president. An activist for 22 years, Ken has served in every position on his local executive.



Ken was inspired to become a union activist early on. "Having come from the non-union hospitality industry, I instantly figured out that the better benefits, wages and working conditions were because I was now in a union job. I thought I should learn more about the union and get involved."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "I hope to build on the things we started over the last two years. I also hope to be more involved in local-building projects, supporting shop stewards and local executives. As HEU president, I'm automatically appointed to the CUPE National Executive Board and the B.C. Federation of Labour Officers board."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "I love getting home to Kelowna and relaxing with my family. Our activities include camping, soccer, watching sports or heading to the ski hill where the kids snowboard and I ski very poorly. I also like to read and enjoy music, but the biggest thing I do for myself is running."

DONISA BERNARDO *financial secretary*

Local: Kamloops Thompson (Royal Inland Hospital) *pharmacy technician*

Donisa has been an activist for 22 years. She has served on the P.E. since 1998 and is in her third term as the union's financial secretary.

"I've always been an activist. But my union activism began in 1989 when all the pharmacy techs at Royal Inland received a letter saying our jobs were redundant and our positions were about to be downgraded. We went to the union and developed strategies that could save our jobs at the higher pay rate. We were successful. After that I signed up as a shop steward, within six months I was chief shop steward and eventually I became chairperson of my local."



THE NEXT TWO YEARS: Donisa says that as the union's full-time financial secretary her first priority is to ensure that HEU "maintains a solid financial position that is able to support the work in the P.E.'s strategic directions paper. Besides my focus on finances, I also want to extend my broader leadership role with members, as well as other unions and community organizations."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "Music is what I go to when I need inspiration or relaxation. Hockey let's me get out my frustrations. I also like flower arranging and love to read."

VICTOR ELKINS, *1st vice-president*

Local: PHSa Amalgamated (B.C. Children's Hospital) *perfusionist assistant*

A 20-year activist, Victor has served on the P.E. since 2006. He has held several positions on his local executive and is currently the assistant secretary-treasurer.

Like many HEU members, Victor became active when he needed representation from a shop steward to deal with a grievance against him.

"The secretary-treasurer of my local got me a shop steward the next day. I was very impressed with the support I received from my steward – it made a real impact on me. The steward was protecting me, fighting for my rights, and clearing my name."

After that, Victor started to attend meetings, "then my first HEU convention, and in 2006 the equity groups started. It all snowballed from there."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: Now serving his second term as 1st vice-president, Victor wants to build on the P.E.'s work over the past two years.

He wants to contribute to improving the union's structure and member representation, with more accessibility to the union's leadership. "This would be [achieved] by having direct communication with members, attending more local membership meetings, hearing what members want, and introducing them to new ideas. I really enjoy facilitating workshops for members."



PERSONAL INTERESTS: Victor is politically involved and has five foster children, four of them full-time. "We do a lot of outings, swimming, hiking, and we've been camping. And I like skydiving."

LOUELLA VINCENT *2nd vice-president*

Local: WHR Lower Mainland *community support worker*

Louella has served three full terms on the Provincial Executive and has been active in the union for about 11 years. She is currently the chairperson of her local and has held several positions on her local executive.

Louella was working for WHR in the community social services sector prior to HEU becoming certified. "When my co-workers started to sign up for the union, I thought it was a good idea. I had seen how certain staff were given preferential treatment and that everyone wasn't treated equally. It was a while before I became formally involved with the local – I had children – but people were coming to me for help on different issues so I decided to step up and run for the executive. I really wanted to improve conditions for myself and my co-workers."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "I want to make sure all sectors are well-represented in our union and that smaller groups don't get lost. We've got a lot of challenges and I think I can help make sure no group, no sector, falls through the cracks."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "Spending time with my four grandchildren, and my mom. And I love to travel. I love to go to different places and meet different people. I'm also involved in my community and with the NDP."

CAROLYN UNSWORTH *3rd vice-president*

Local: Queen's Park (Queen's Park Care Centre) *acute care aide*

An activist since 1982, Carolyn has served on the P.E. since 2006 and has held several positions on her local executive.

Carolyn moved to B.C. from the United Kingdom

in her early 20s. She wasn't long in her new job before she felt the need to speak up about the deplorable working conditions she witnessed.

"I got my wings early," she says. "I came here as a new immigrant from England where I worked for the National Health Service. My first job in Canada was working in a private nursing home. The patients and staff were treated terribly. I couldn't watch the way the employer treated them. I knew that unions were good for workers and working conditions, so I phoned HEU... and HEU stood by us and fought for us every step of the way."



THE NEXT TWO YEARS: Actively involved in the union's nursing team and environment subcommittee, as a P.E. member and an acute care aide, Carolyn says she wants to continue to bring her voice as a front-line HEU member to the provincial table.

PERSONAL INTERESTS: Carolyn is an avid runner and is very involved in environmentalism. And she loves spending time with her five children and three grandchildren. "It keeps me grounded," she says.

JACQUELINE ZILKIE *senior trustee*

Local: Kaslo (Victorian Community Health Centre) *licensed practical nurse*

A union activist for about 17 years, Jacqueline is currently the chairperson of her local and has held several positions on her local executive during that time. She has also served two full terms and a partial term on the P.E. and has been involved in HEU's nursing team.

Jacqueline became active in her local because "I was seeing so many injustices and so much unfairness in the workplace. I wanted to advocate for members, particularly those who weren't comfortable speaking up for themselves. That was also what inspired me to become a shop steward. The thing that has inspired my activism most of all is my deep belief in quality public health care. It's something I've fought for ever since becoming a health care worker. And it's what I want for everyone."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "I look forward to assisting in training local table officers and helping locals create a solid base from which to build greater strength and effectiveness. I also want to provide representation for all HEU members – regardless of sector, occupation or location – and be available to assist them where I'm able, or direct them, if I'm not, to where they can get the assistance they need."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "I love spending time with my husband and my two daughters."

WINSTON CLARKE *senior trustee-elect*

Local: Surrey (Surrey – Czorny Alzheimer Centre) *maintenance worker V*

Winston is new to the P.E. but has been active in HEU for about 15 years. He is currently trustee of his local and over the years has held several positions on his local executive.

Winston says he always had an interest in the union, as both his parents were union members, but he didn't start to get involved until he became a full-time worker. "Along the way, there were always things that peaked my interest, but my first



real involvement came through strike action in the '90s. I became a shop steward because there weren't enough stewards from maintenance and our executive needed some help, so I volunteered."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "Because I've worked in a number of departments – stores, food and nutrition, maintenance – I think I have empathy for a number of classifications. I understand the different issues members are facing and I think I can voice those concerns based on the experience I've had. We're going through a lot of changes and transition right now, so I am hoping I can bring ideas to the table that will be helpful."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "Spending time with my family, we have a close-knit extended family, and do a lot of things together. I actively participate in my church with the music, and am a member of the Jamaican Association of B.C."

CAROL KENZIE *trustee*

Local: Kelowna (Reids Corner, Kelowna Warehouse) *purchasing assistant*

An activist since 1988, Carol has served on the P.E. since 2006. She is currently trustee of her local and has held several positions on her local executive.

It wasn't until the mid-90s that she became a shop steward, she says. "It was the 'woman thing.'

I had two small kids and wanted to become more involved, but couldn't find the time for it. Once my girls got a little older and were in school, I felt I could take more time for myself. I chose to spend that time on union activism."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: Carol's been on the union's clerical subcommittee for two terms and wants to continue her work with the occupational groups. "I believe in our strategic planning direction, in that we need to be more inclusive, and we need to draw everybody in. I think we've become too separated by occupation, by region... We need to identify ourselves as HEU, not by our occupation or by where we work, but as HEU members. I'd like to see us think and act as one – the union principle – and get back to where we started from years ago."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: Carol enjoys lots of physical activities, including hiking, golfing, traveling and riding her bike. She enjoys spending time with her daughters, and fishing with her Dad.



REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

LYNNETTE KINGSTON *Fraser*

Local: Chilliwack Amalgamated (Chilliwack General Hospital) *recreation worker*

Lynnette has been an HEU activist for about five years when she became secretary-treasurer of her local. She began serving on the P.E. in 2009.

As to what inspired her interest in becoming a union activist, she says, "It was when I had to go through an arbitration process that was very difficult. The local executive was extremely supportive. Although this happened at a different local, where I was working at the time, the exceptional services and support I received from that local inspired me to become actively involved when I moved to the Chilliwack General Hospital."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "I want to build unity and strength in the Fraser region for all of our members and I want to be a leader in fighting back against privatization. In doing that, I want to try



new ideas, see what works and what doesn't, and then share that information with other regions. I also want to be able to take our issues forward on a provincial level and corroborate with other health regions, so we can fight privatization more effectively as a unified provincial union."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "Art and creativity are two of my major passions. I am politically active in my community and I also do volunteer work for a number of different organizations."

JOANNE FOOTE *Fraser*

Local: Fraser Crossing (Holyrood Manor recreation aide)

An activist for 22 years, Joanne was first elected to the P.E. in 2000 and has held several positions on her local executive. She has served four full terms and a partial term on the P.E. and is currently secretary-treasurer of her local.

Joanne is a band member of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation in Ontario. She says she's "always been active, but probably being angry at a private, for-profit employer, and the injustices that were going on, made me get involved in the union."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "I'd like to see the union continue strengthening and mentoring our new activists, and help stop privatization and contracting out. I'd like to keep everybody on the same page to raise awareness and help the public understand what's happening in health care – like user-fee and private clinics."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: Joanne enjoys gardening, arts and crafts, and recently took a course on making jewelry. She is vice-president of the newly established Fraser River All Nations Aboriginal Society whose goal is to open a Friendship Centre channeled through Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Community Services. She is recently widowed and the mother of a 24-year-old son.



DEBERA WILLIS *Interior*

Local: 100 Mile (100 Mile District General Hospital) *licensed practical nurse*

Debera is a new member of the P.E. but she has been a union activist for eight years. Currently, she is a shop steward, an LPN (PRF) steward and secretary-treasurer of her local.

Debera first got involved in the union because "I didn't like the way management was treating some of my co-workers. And I could see that some were not able to speak for themselves. I also didn't like the rotation I was working – it was a six-day rotation and people were calling in sick. So I talked to management and the union, and got the rotation changed. After that, the more questions I asked, the more my chief shop steward encouraged me to step up and become a steward."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "I want to be a voice for members north and east of the Lower Mainland and give them some hope that their concerns will be heard. I also want to be part of creating positive change in the workplace for all classifications. I'm a hard worker, a positive thinker, and a team-player. The union is evolving and I want to be part of that."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "My family, which includes my five grandchildren, and spending time with my spouse. We like quadding and snowmobiling. And I love to garden."



MARGIE ANDERSON *Interior*

Local: Columbia View (Columbia View Lodge) *activity worker*

Over the past 30 years as a union activist in HEU, Margie has held several positions at her local and is

currently a local shop steward. She has also served two full terms on the P.E. and two partial terms in 2003 and 2005.

Margie originally got involved in the union "because members were coming to me needing help with a lot of different issues. I was able to talk with them and listen to them and in some cases help them out. I started taking union education courses early on to learn more about how to help members defend their rights. Also, I got mad when a job review request was turned down. I felt it wasn't right, and from that moment on, I realized it was really important to learn how to protect our collective agreement rights."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "I want to be able to local-build so that every member has a functioning local and is better able to protect their rights. As a union leader, I will be there to assist, listen and follow through on members' issues."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "My family and friends. I like to travel. I love movies. I'm involved with women's rights and I volunteer in my community and for the NDP."



RHONDA BRUCE *Interior*

Local: South Okanagan (Sunnybank Centre) *rehab assistant*

Rhonda has been an activist for about 20 years and is serving her second term on the P.E. She is currently secretary-treasurer, chief shop steward, and the OH&S rep for her local and has held other positions in the past.

As to what sparked her union involvement, Rhonda says, "I could see that a lot of changes were beginning to happen in health care – lots of restructuring, LPNs going full scope, and there were a lot of rumours. I decided that if I didn't get involved, I wouldn't know what was going on or where it was all headed. But I also knew that the union would have more information and I could count on the union reps to give me the facts."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "My hope is to unite us more because there have been divisions. I really believe we can pull our membership together and we can be strong. But right now, I sense that members are fearful to stand up for their rights. A lot has to do with the way Gordon Campbell has treated us, and I want to help change that."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "I'm interested in the outdoors, spending time with my husband, my two boys and the rest of our family. I'm also a runner and I do some 10k runs when I can, which I really enjoy."



LOIS DORAN *North*

Local: Prince George (Canadian Mental Health Association – Prince George Branch) *community health support worker*

Lois is serving her second term on the P.E. She has been a union activist for about 15 years, holding several positions on her local executive. Currently, she is chairperson of her local.

Lois says she first got involved in her local because "somebody had to represent community health workers at local meetings. Then I discovered the opportunities for learning – in the union and for personal growth – were excellent. Also, my own personal values are reflected in the union in terms of social activism, human rights and people standing together. It's a lot like a family. You support each other. Every part is a vital part."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "I am honoured to represent the north which is the largest geographical region in the province. Because we're such a vast area, there





Electoral officer Janet Routledge leads the swearing-in exercise of HEU's newly elected Provincial Executive and alternates on the last day of the union's 27th biennial convention.

are a lot of places I haven't been to, so I look forward to the opportunity to meet with members in every part of our region, to learn from them, to hear about the challenges they face, to work with them to address their issues wherever possible and to make sure they have a voice at the provincial table."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "My family, being involved with our labour council, volunteering in my community. I also like to read, sew and paint."

PAT SHAW *North*

Local: South Peace (Dawson Creek and District Hospital) *nursing unit assistant (unit clerk)*

A union activist for about 12 years, Pat was elected to the P.E. in 2008. She is chairperson of her local and has held several other positions.

Pat became a union activist because "I could see how the employer was abusing their power and how it was affecting people who didn't know how to protect themselves. I had read my contract so knew there were things they shouldn't be doing. I got in touch with my steward and that's where it all began. I think that's a common thread for a lot of activists. Once you get to know your rights, you become more empowered to stand up for yourself and other members."



THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "Now that we have clear roles for regional vice-presidents, we can be more proactive. I am really looking forward to regular contact with my assigned locals. I am particularly looking forward to helping locals implement campaigns. In my experience, locals don't always do provincial campaigns, mostly because they don't know where to start. I am hoping I can make a difference by helping locals to develop and implement campaigns."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "I love spending time with my two granddaughters, camping, hiking and quadding. I also do crafts – making my own cards, beading jewelry, and I like to read."

BEV TRYNCHY *Vancouver Coastal*

Local: St. Paul's (St. Paul's Hospital) *staff scheduling clerk*

Bev has served on the P.E. since 2007 and has been a union activist for 23 years. She is currently chief shop steward at her local.

Although she's held many local executive positions at her work sites (Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, then St. Paul's), the BC Liberals' attack on health care workers inspired her to run for the P.E.



"Bill 37 and the fallout from it made me want to do something. Instead of sitting back and saying 'poor me', I got more involved at the P.E. level to fight the Liberal government for the betterment of our members. It's easy to complain, but you've got to be progressive enough to do something, and I chose to do something by becoming more active in the union."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: Bev has been involved in HEU's clerical subcommittee and instrumental in bringing their issues forward. She says she plans to keep reinforcing the saying that "united we stand, divided we fall". Bev believes "we need to be realistic

about what we can obtain, be completely behind our strong leadership, and be progressive in our thinking because the world as we know it is changing."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "I like playing golf, cooking and entertaining with friends and family. I also like playing poker."

KELLY KNOX *Vancouver Coastal*

Local: St. Paul's (St. Paul's Hospital) *ward aide*

Kelly has served on the P.E. since 1996 and has been chairperson of his local for nine years. He is a third-generation HEU member who walked his first picket line in 1976. His activism grew from there.



He recalls a sit-in held by workers over a lack of house-keeping supplies. When the employer threatened to fire the participants, Kelly approached the union for steward support.

Eventually, he became a shop steward himself and remembers threatening his employer with 500 charges of discrimination against women. "At the time, their seniority list was done by a private company and seniority was based on payroll lists that only calculated paid worked hours. So anyone who was on unpaid leave, such as maternity, did not have the correct seniority." In the end, the seniority issue was resolved and the work was brought back in-house.

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "As one of three regional vice-presidents, one of my goals is to get locals more interconnected. It's hard to get locals to help each other if they can't locate each other."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: A scout leader for 10 years, Kelly enjoys cooking and was professionally trained. "I also like camping and love scuba diving."

JOHN FRASER *Vancouver Coastal*

Local: Powell River Health Care Workers (Sodexo at Powell River Hospital) *dietary clerk*

John has been an HEU activist for seven years. He is currently the chair, chief shop steward, and OH&S co-chair at his local. He began serving on the P.E. in 2010.

Hired by Sodexo following the mass layoffs of in-house support workers in 2003, John was immediately inspired to become a union activist. "What I saw was the blatant disregard government had for the workers; they were totally stripped of their rights. It was such a brutal atrocity of justice. I still can't believe a government could do that. Members lost their houses, families, pensions...And I also saw the injustices that are happening for the private-sector workers."



THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "I would like to bring ideas to the table that will help bridge the differences between our private-sector members and facility members. An HEU member is an HEU member. A brother is a brother and a sister is a sister. So one of my priorities will be to help bring us all back together, as one fighting force."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "I like to travel and have been to many parts of the world. My last trip was to South America. I love to meet people from different places and learn about different cultures."

DARLENE BOWN *Vancouver Island-south*

Local: Victoria General (Victoria General Hospital) *sterilization technician*



Darlene has been an HEU activist for 20 years. She is currently the vice-chair of her local and chief shop steward, and has held other positions in the past.

Darlene became active because, "I didn't like how we were being treated. I saw a lot of favouritism. And I was amazed that people didn't know their rights under their collective agreement and didn't enforce them. I had experienced oppression prior to becoming an HEU member. I had also been a union member before, so I knew how important our collective agreement rights are. I decided to get involved to help make sure people are treated with fairness, dignity and respect. That's a fundamental principle of the union movement."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: "VGH is my home, but south Vancouver Island is my local. For me, the key thing is communication. People need to know what's happening in other areas and I'm an advocate of getting information out there. I can also play a role in mentoring...all members are equal, they're all really important, none more than others."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "My pets, I love animals. I care for my mom who is 84 years of age. I like to workout, reading and photography. And I've been known to sing at a karaoke bar."

CAROL BUNCH *Vancouver Island-north*

Local: District 69 Community Health Workers (Parksville and District Home Support) *community health worker*

An activist for 25 years, Carol has served two terms on the P.E. Currently, she is the chairperson and chief shop steward on her local executive.



"It's pay-it-forward for me. I'm a recovering alcoholic. AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] gave me a life; the union gave me a voice. When I sobered up, I did what I needed to do in the union – attend meetings and start to understand how the union works. My children were still at home at the time and I needed to raise them. But once they were grown and gone, I became a full-fledged activist."

THE NEXT TWO YEARS: Carol says she'd like to see the work of the previous P.E. continue, as she feels it's moving in the right direction. She also says, "I'd like to contribute some strength to the union, and some positive hope, for sure. Hope, to me, is everything. I'm very much a team-player, and want to encourage positive consensus. We're going to be okay."

PERSONAL INTERESTS: "Family is very important to me. I keep in touch with my family. My older sister lives with us. My husband and I belong to AA, so we still attend those meetings. One day at a time."

HEU rallies behind UNITE HERE! workers

Demanding an end to cutbacks and “corporate greed”, hotel workers across North America have been waging a massive public campaign to secure their jobs and improve their working conditions.

The hospitality workers are members of UNITE HERE and in recent months they have taken their struggle for fair contracts into the streets of major cities on both sides of the border, from Vancouver to San Antonio.

In June, they seized the opportunity to address more than 1,200 delegates from around the world who were attending the International Trade Union Confederation World Congress in Vancouver, B.C.

Mei Miao, a local Four Seasons Hotel banquet worker told delegates, “We take pride in our work and enjoy taking care of customers. Yet these companies that are making huge profits keep cutting our jobs. Many of my co-workers are doing the jobs of two or three people. We can’t afford to get sick. We can’t afford to retire.”

By summer’s end, UNITE HERE members working for Hyatt hotels in Toronto, Chicago, Los Angeles and Honolulu staged one-day strikes as well as protests against hotel chains in Vancouver, Boston, San Francisco and other North American cities.

Depending on the bargaining unit, issues include wages, workloads, reduced hours of work, poor pension and health benefits, and in some hotel chains, “fake” environmental programs that workers say give management the go-ahead to cut housekeeping shifts just a few hours before employees are scheduled to work.

In September, UNITE HERE members organized one-day strikes and protests at various downtown hotels during the Toronto International Film Festival, capturing strong support from actors and other celebrities.

In Vancouver, 1,500 union members of UNITE HERE Local 40 – who work for the Westin Bayshore, the Hyatt Regency, the Renaissance and the Four

Seasons – have been without a contract since June 30.

With the Westin Bayshore as the site of HEU’s biennial convention in October, delegates were anxious to give their UNITE HERE sisters and brothers a strong show of support – both inside the hotel and out.

On the opening day of convention, hotel workers were invited to take the podium and speak to the issues they are facing on the job.

As each worker mounted the stage to describe their fight for a fair contract and the negative effects of the hotel’s “green card” program, HEU members were on their feet with several standing ovations. The following day, HEU delegates joined an enthusiastic rally in support of UNITE HERE’s demands for a fair deal from the hotel.

Romeo Bala, from Westin’s housekeeping department told the crowd, “We love our hotel. We work hard. But because of the “green” program, they hurt most of the room attendants...enough is enough!”

HEU speakers included HEU’s president Ken Robinson, secretary-business manager Judy Darcy and Sodexo worker Cora Mojica, chairperson of the union’s Seven Shining Stars local.

“I know how hard you guys work to earn a living and I know you deserve a lot more respect than you are getting from your employer,” said Mojica. “Keep on fighting for your rights my sisters and brothers.”



Throughout the week-long convention, delegates refused to participate in Westin’s so-called green program, which provides a \$5 coupon to guests who cancel housekeeping services. UNITE HERE says this is a very different program than the more traditional option where guests were encouraged to forgo daily linen and towel services only while retaining basic housekeeping services.

Under this new program workers lose shifts on short notice, and are then forced to deal with heavier workloads once guests check out of their rooms.

Most recently, Delta Chelsea workers in Toronto – members of UNITE HERE Local 75 – secured a new collective agreement in late November, following a 13-day strike.

The new contract includes better protection and job security, no layoffs due to subcontracting, wage lifts and increased health and pension benefits.

Management also agreed to ditch their plans for a green card program at that hotel.

European trade deal threatens public services

CANADA’S PUBLIC SERVICES are under threat from a free trade pact being negotiated with the European Union, a prominent Canadian activist told HEU’s convention.

Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians warned that the *Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)* is the most dangerous free trade pact because it opens all publicly held resources and institutions to takeover by private corporations.

But she noted that Canadians and activists from other countries have united to defeat other attempts at global agreements that allow for unchecked privatization.

“Some of us are calling this wave of privatization of the last 30 years the modern enclosure of the commons and we’re fighting back,” said Barlow in a talk that focussed on protecting water as a public resource, which she called the ultimate health care issue.

Unions and anti-free trade groups have noted that existing pacts like the *Canada-US Free Trade Agreement* and the *North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)* have caused massive loss of decent-paying jobs, privatization and deregulation, and have prevented initiatives such as public auto insurance in two provinces.

European countries have a long tradition of public services and a trade pact with the EU might not seem like such a threat. But as the Canadian Union of Public Employees reported last year, “Restructuring in Europe over the past several decades has led to a massive increase in the privatization of public services including water, energy, telecommunications, postal, education and social services like child care.”

Water and pharmaceutical corporations are the most vociferous proponents of CETA. Firms such as the French-owned water multinationals Suez and Veolia, and Big Pharma outfits Bayer AG, Glaxo SmithKline and Merck are among the top 100 corporations pressing the Harper government to sign on, said CUPE.

CUPE recently joined with three other national unions to produce a position paper, *A Critical Assessment of the Proposed Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement Between the European Union and Canada*. It warns that trade deals can block the development of new public programs. “If a new social

program is introduced, Canada may be forced to pay compensation to companies from either the US or Mexico that provide this service on a for-profit basis.

“A new national Pharmacare program would require Canada to deal with US drug companies and insurance companies who will argue that their inalienable right to a profit from these areas is being compromised.”

Under NAFTA rules any favours given to new trading partners must be given to NAFTA partners, said Barlow, calling CETA “the most dangerous of them all” because it opens all public spending by “sub-national” (provincial and municipal governments) to corporate challenges. If a local government wants to ensure public control of its water resources, for example, or favour local suppliers, it can face compensation demands by private firms, she warned.

Despite the free trade juggernaut there is hope. The city of Hamilton recently reversed the privatization of its water systems and the state of Vermont has ensured public use of water trumps any private corporate agenda, she pointed out.

And, as Barlow noted at a recent Council of Canadians meeting “we’ve stopped every free trade deal after NAFTA,” including the *Multilateral Agreement on Investments*, and the *Security and Prosperity Partnerships*.

DAN KEETON



Maude Barlow warned that the new European pact would be the most dangerous free trade deal yet.

Commercial contracts are one step closer to public scrutiny

In a precedent-setting decision, the B.C. Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) ordered the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA) to release the full details of its multi-million dollar commercial contracts with Compass, Sodexo and K-Bro Linen Systems to the Hospital Employees' Union.

HEU had filed requests for the contracts in 2007 under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)*, but VCHA would only release redacted documents, that is, documents where words or sections were blocked out.

VCHA argued that it was entitled to hold back this information citing certain provisions in the Act. HEU then requested a review by the OIPC of VCHA's decision to hold back information in the contracts.

During that review, Compass, Sodexo and K-Bro argued that a full release of their contracts would reveal information that might be advantageous to their competitors. But the OIPC found that the corporations failed to make their cases.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy said the ruling is a milestone and could open up billions of dollars of privatization contracts to public scrutiny.

"In the last decade, there

has been unprecedented privatization throughout the public sector in B.C. and it's all happened with very little public scrutiny," said Darcy.

"Hopefully, this ruling will result in a higher standard of accountability to the public – and a clearer picture of the true costs of these controversial policies."

In her ruling, privacy commissioner Elizabeth Denham stated, "Given that these contracts are frequently requested under freedom of information requests, public bodies could promote greater accountability and decrease their administrative burden by making most contracts publicly available once negotiations are complete..."

Of the three corporations

involved, only K-Bro has requested a judicial review of the OIPC ruling. The release of the Compass and Sodexo contracts is temporarily suspended until the court makes its ruling, which is final. That process is underway and may take up to a year to complete.

Clerical Team Appreciation Day

On September 22, HEU's third Clerical Team Appreciation Day, locals across the province took time to recognize and appreciate their HEU clerical team.

Activities included displaying posters featuring HEU's popular, multi-tasking clerical mascot "Fredrica", sharing cakes, holding raffles, and distributing the clerical sub-

committee's 2011 "Keeping your public health care journey on track" calendar.

The day helped raise awareness of the crucial role clerical workers play in patient care, both among clerical workers and their HEU colleagues.

HEU raises funds for people with HIV/AIDS

On September 19, the HEU Team participated in the 2010 AIDS WALK for LIFE, helping to raise more than \$320,000 for the B.C. Persons with AIDS Society.

For several years, HEU has supported BCPWA, a non-profit organization which provides services to people in our communities living with HIV and AIDS. Led by the Pink Triangle Standing Committee, this

BALANCING IT ALL

PATTY GIBSON

The union's research director, **MARCY COHEN**, leaves a legacy of building common ground across a broad spectrum of health care stakeholders.

COLLABORATION IN ACTION

Throughout Marcy Cohen's 15-year career in HEU's research department, she has worked, more often than not, behind the scenes – digging deep into the value of members' work and drawing the links between their job conditions and the ability of our health system to deliver quality care.

Equipped with all the academic credentials befitting a research and policy analyst – she is a graduate of both the University of Calgary and the University of Toronto – perhaps none have served her as well as her roots in community activism.

A long-time feminist and social justice advocate, Cohen was initially drawn to HEU because of the union's commitment to its members and to building strong relationships with the community.

"From the first day I started working at the union, there were opportunities for me to work directly with members and the community," recalls Cohen. "It was so inspiring for me to meet with HEU members and to see how very committed they were to their patients and residents, and to public health care."

Hired in the fall of 1995, Cohen's initial work focused on long-term care, more training for licensed practical nurses and care aides, researching the connection between low injury rates and high staffing levels, and assisting the union to develop and pioneer a provincial bridging program for care aides who wanted to become LPNs.

"In 1997, I began working with HEU's nursing team," says Cohen. "The union organized educational conferences and, in bargaining, we secured additional



MIKE OLD PHOTO

"The more we can build common ground with others, the more equipped we are to make real gains for our members and public health care."

positions and training funds for LPNs and care aides working in long-term care.

"Those were such important gains for our members and they helped improve quality care for seniors. But once the Liberals came into power, the entire landscape changed. Instead of moving forward with increased staffing and better training – all the things that were improving care – we were suddenly confronted with *Bill 29*, facility closures, reduced wages, and contracting out."

Despite those setbacks, Cohen says the union rose to the challenge – gathering evidence, exposing the harm, countering the Fraser Institute's negative propaganda about the value of hospital support services and putting forward a positive, solutions-oriented approach.

"The first real opportunity to present solid alternatives to privatization came with the premier's so-called 'Conversation on Health,'" recalls Cohen. "That's when we provided union and community activists with clear, evidence-based solutions proving that public health care was sustainable and what was needed to improve the system. It was a huge success."

Looking to the future, Cohen says effective health care advocacy will always be a balancing act – weighing what's wrong with privatization and why it doesn't work, against positive alternatives. "People need to know there is another way, a better way. It's what gives people hope, hope that change is possible."

Throughout much of her tenure at HEU, Cohen has been the union's representative on the board of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. For the last ten years, she has been its chair.

And while it's taken a great deal of effort at times to balance her many responsibilities, Cohen says her rewards have come from seeing successful collaboration in action – on HEU's nursing team, in the union's living wage campaign, and through her work with community groups, progressive employers, academics, research organizations and health care advocates on issues of common concern.

"There's so much we can achieve when we work with a broad range of allies," says Cohen. "There's incredible power in building relationships, and the more we can build common ground with others, the more equipped we are to make real gains for our members and public health care."

Although Cohen is retiring from her full-time job at HEU, she says she will continue to stay involved in health policy issues and in her community work.

As to what she will miss most, she says, "The members. I am always so impressed with the care and intelligence they bring to their work, whatever their classifications. They are the guardians of our public health care system. And they always made me feel really proud that I work for HEU."



Promoting members work

HEU's 100 Mile House local seized an opportunity to educate the public about members' diverse work in health care during the annual South Cariboo Fall Fair in mid-September.

Organized by Becky Jacobson and Debera Willis, 100 Mile House members set up a booth that showcased individual workers and their jobs and featured material from the union's Stand UP for Seniors Care campaign.

on care and support to residents every day and come to know the needs of those in their care intimately."

But the continuity of care is compromised when many operators and administrators of these facilities keep staffing levels down or contract out care and support jobs to private companies where staff turnover is higher due to lower wages and lack of job security.

"Residents with dementia in particular respond better to familiar caregivers and may

grow anxious and aggressive when faced with someone they don't recognize," says Darcy. "And families feel more comfortable when they know the people looking after their loved ones."

The health and frailty of seniors living in facilities has changed significantly since 2002 when only those with more complex care needs became eligible for residential care.

"It's up to employers to ensure a safe workplace and

continued on page 18

year's HEU Team fundraised more than \$1,000 through Walk pledges and a skydiving initiative. About 1,000 walkers took part in the two kilometre stroll through Vancouver's scenic West End.

Preventing violence in long-term care

Health care workers face more incidents of on-the-job aggression and violence than any other group of workers in B.C., including police officers. That's not new but in recent years, dementia-related violence against those who attend to seniors in residential facilities has escalated.

In October, WorkSafeBC released a guide on preventing dementia-related violence that contains solid

information for caregivers on interventions that can prevent or minimize the risk of on-the-job injury. But it's only part of the solution.

Health care workers, especially in long-term care facilities, frequently identify inadequate staffing levels and heavy workloads as primary reasons for not being able to deliver the proper care and attention to residents. These problems become more significant when attending to those with dementia – resulting in increased risk of aggressive or violent acts at work.

And this is compounded by the frequent contracting out of

care and support staff in the sector, causing high rates of employee turnover and interrupting the continuity of care for these vulnerable residents.

"As a person's care needs become more complex with complicated health issues that often include dementia, caregivers require more time to properly complete daily tasks without upsetting the resident," says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

"Licensed practical nurses and care aides provide hands-

ON THE JOB

MARGI BLAMEY

First Nations shop steward **CRYSTAL ZELLER** believes knowing your collective agreement is the key to engaging members and strengthening their locals.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

When Crystal Zeller started working at Xaaynangaa Naay or House of Life, the health centre in Skidegate, she hadn't given much thought to the union.

Eight and a half years later, Zeller is now the receptionist at the centre, chairperson of the Skidegate local and an experienced steward.

How long has she been involved in the union? Zeller laughs and replies, "Most of the eight and a half years."

There are 22 HEU members working at the health centre, which includes a dental clinic, and it's a busy place. As the receptionist, and a shop steward, Zeller looks after patients and looks out for workers.

When people call in to make or cancel an appointment, or ask for information, there's a good chance that Zeller knows them. She's become good at identifying needs beyond what the caller tells her.

"Being in a small community...I know how people sound and if something is off," she says.

Zeller's union activity is not only part of her identity at the health centre; she is recognized for her involvement beyond the workplace.

When the local elects its officers, "we make a point of letting our community know who is on our executive," Zeller says. "We tell people, if you hear something [about the union or the centre], if you have questions, you can ask us."

Building and maintaining healthy relationships in Skidegate and the surrounding area is key. Much of

the time, Zeller and other officers find that they are communicating and correcting information that's out there, saying, "No, that's not how it is. This is how it is."

Workplace relationships also require nurturing. Again communication, formal and informal, is critical. As a steward, Zeller addresses many issues – with and on behalf of the members – and utilizes whatever avenues for resolution are available and appropriate.

"Usually, because we're a small centre, I will go and talk to our supervisor first," she says. "And we do work things out before we need to do paperwork."

"Other times, things get stuck in one place. Then we have to find another way."

That's when a shop steward accesses the formal grievance procedure and relies on the rights and provisions of the collective agreement. Like any shop steward, Zeller fields a variety of questions, but most concerns coming from Skidegate local members are about job postings, casual and part-time work, call-in (scheduling), and seniority.

When it comes to members' concerns, most relate back to the seniority list. "Things are always changing. So many jobs are changing," says Zeller. "The seniority list has to count."

What does Zeller think is most important for a shop steward? "You need to know your collective agreement," she says without hesitation.

The members at the Xaaynangaa Naay health centre are covered by a collective agreement between HEU and the Skidegate Band Council – one of six First Nations contracts that the union has negotiated.

Zeller thinks that a collective agreement is more



than rights and protections. It's a great source of information and a rallying point for members.

"When your sister or brother comes to you and asks something about the collective agreement, have them sit down with you and look for the answer together," she suggests.

At local meetings, time is often taken to check out something in the contract. Members are encouraged to review it. "Say, I found this in our collective agreement and thought you might like to know about it," says Zeller.

"Often members don't have the time to look at the collective agreement. When they do, they may end up on the occupational health and safety committee." As shop stewards know, mentoring just comes with the territory.

What would Zeller pass along to new shop stewards? "The more involved you are with your local, the more you know your collective agreement, the stronger you are to help members."

HEU First Nations collective agreements

Gitxsan Health Society, Hazelton
 Gitanyow Human Services, Kitwanga
 H'ulh-etun Health Society, Chemainus
 Nisga'a Valley Health Board, New Aiyansh
 Skidegate Band Council, Skidegate
 Stz'uminus First Nation, Ladysmith

continued from page 17

that starts with adequate staffing levels,” Darcy adds. “The research is unequivocal, resident aggression and violence against workers is reduced when adequate staffing levels are in place and continuity of care is maintained.”

A 2009 Stats Canada study of long-term and acute care facilities across the country found a clear link between abuse from patients/residents and the workplace environment.

And a 2008 York University study on violence in 71 unionized, public, long-term care facilities in Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia found that short-staffing, workload, lack of supervisor support, and inadequate training to deal with mental health issues like

dementia were contributing factors to violence at work.

HEU's third annual Support Workers Day

HEU locals celebrated our third annual Support Workers Day at the end of August with a variety of events and activities.

“The most important thing about the day was having everyone recognize who support workers are,” said subcommittee co-chair, John Evans.

“It was great to stand side by side with them – showing we are all equally important in our health care system.”

Many locals – Fort Nelson, New Vista, Overlander, Kamloops/Thompson, Langley, Kitimat, and a host of others – celebrated

Support Workers Day. Yucalta local even emailed smile cards to all staff in their contact list and created a private event on Facebook.

HEU members have a Timbit for you

It's a first in B.C.

In early October, HEU members were hired under the facilities subsector collective agreement to run a newly opened Tim Hortons site at Prince George Regional Hospital's cafeteria.

Unlike some other hospitals in the province where private companies run their own franchises, the Northern Health Authority (NHA) owns and operates this Tim Hortons location under a licensing agreement.

That agreement allows



TROY ZOHNER PHOTO

Shop steward Kathy Burwell with HEU member Xuan Herring, a food service worker at Northern Health's new Tim Hortons site.

NHA to hire in-house HEU food service workers through the facilities job posting process.

“We're very proud of this,” says HEU servicing director Kathy Jessome.

“The NHA did a cost-analysis, realized they could make a profit, and still treat workers appropriately under the facilities subsector collective agreement.”

Jessome says she credits

NHA “for making such a great decision. It's fundamentally the right thing to do.”

At press time, a number of additional positions were posted with job selections to follow.

The new Tim Hortons location replaces the Second Cup kiosk, a privately owned and operated specialty coffee retailer with non-unionized workers.

DECEMBER

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

DECEMBER 1

World AIDS Day

DECEMBER 3

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

DECEMBER 6

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

DECEMBER 7-10

Provincial Executive meeting

DECEMBER 10

International Human Rights Day

JANUARY 1

Happy New Year

JANUARY 16 –

FEBRUARY 18

CLC Pacific Region Winter School Harrison Hot Springs

JANUARY 24-28

Provincial Executive meeting

FEBRUARY

Black History Month

FEBRUARY 3

Chinese New Year

Coalition power a strategy for change

At a time when many union and community activists are seeking ways to work together to further a progressive social agenda in B.C., Amanda Tattersall's *Power in Coalition: Strategies for Strong Unions and Social Change* is a timely and welcome read.

A native of Sydney, Australia, Tattersall began her five-year investigation into coalition-building while still working as a union organizer.

She wanted to find out how to create powerful coalitions and keep them going. What works? What doesn't? How do you forge effective partnerships between trade unions and community organizations? Why do some alliances succeed early on, only to fall apart in the long run?

These were some of the questions that prompted Tattersall to dig deeply into the recent coalition-building experiences of groups close to home and farther afield.

Power in Coalition focuses on the experiences of three coalitions based in Australia, Canada and the United States. Drawing on lessons learned from their challenges, successes and failures, Tattersall ultimately concludes that it is indeed possible to build powerful coalitions “that achieve social change, rebuild civil society organizations, and revitalize unions.”

Success, however, hinges on the degree to which coalitions truly engage the participating organizations, their members, and the broader public.

For labour, in particular, she emphasizes the fundamental importance of being willing to work toward goals that reflect the needs of all the participating organizations. Long-term success cannot be achieved, she says, when community groups are simply invited into coalition to support union goals.

At the same time, Tattersall says that when unions do choose to enter into coalition with other civil society organizations, in a spirit of mutual respect and reciprocity, union power can be strengthened.

Overall, she identifies five key lessons that are common features of successful coalitions.

First, a powerful coalition is not built through a “come-

one-come-all” approach. In terms of relationship-building, decision-making, resource-sharing, commitment and accountability, fewer organizations are far more likely to create a strong coalition. That's because they are less likely to water down their common goals to achieve maximum consensus.

Second, coalitions are strongest when the leaders of participating organizations directly participate in coalition decision-making and are at the table to contribute their campaign strategy skills. She also says leaders are best able to act as bridge builders with other organizations.

Third, the shared interests of coalition participants must be wedded to broader public concerns. This means connecting the specific interest of coalition participants to larger values of humanity and social justice.

Fourth, in order to build political pressure, campaigns need to pay close attention to electoral and legislative opportunities in their long-term planning.

And finally, a coalition's central strategy and influence can be strengthened by supporting parallel local or regional campaign strategies.

In addition to these five overall strategies, Tattersall emphasizes the need to build and nurture relationships between organizations as well as pursuing strategies that can increase the organizational strength of individual groups.

By the same token, she challenges the commonly held view that winning on a particular policy issue is the only measure of a coalition's success.

In terms of advancing social change, she says success is also achieved when coalition efforts build the capacity and individual strength of participating organizations or help shape the broader political climate – regardless of defeat on a particular issue.

Overall, *Power in Coalition* is full of practical, thought-provoking information. It's less than 200 pages, but densely packed, and at times takes on a scholarly tone. But for community and union activists who want to further discussions about how to form effective, lasting alliances, it's a must-read.

PATTY GIBSON



MIKE OLD PHOTO

Amanda Tattersall's new book on coalition building is a timely read.

Retirements

Residents and staff at St. Mary's Hospital in Sechelt will miss care aide **Susan Morrison**.

She retired in August, after working in a variety of areas at Totem Lodge (ECU) over the past 18 years. "I am very grateful to have been employed in a union job," says Susan. "I've appreciated our benefits, and the comfort and security of knowing the union protects its members."

She loves playing bingo, reading the latest medical news, and going on road trips. Susan and her husband John have recently moved to Oliver to enjoy retirement.

Long-time activity aide **Charlotte Derksen** retired in September from Simpson Manor Hospital (Fort Langley). In her

25 years as an HEU member, Charlotte attended three HEU conventions and held numerous local executive positions – most recently, chief shop steward.

"My union experience has helped me appreciate the value of discussion when issues arise," says Charlotte. "Discussing issues really can help resolve problems."

Charlotte plans to continue participating in "Relay for Life" – a fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society. In spring 2011, Charlotte and her husband Richard plan to head south to savour U.S. destinations.



MORRISON



DERKSON

After 14 years at Kiwanis Village Lodge (Nanaimo), food service worker **Diane Usselman** retired on August 1. Her co-workers enjoyed working with Diane. She will be missed by everyone.

In Memoriam

Friends and colleagues mourn the loss of **June Bradbury** (Trail local) and **Ruby Hardwick** (Kimberley local) – two activists and long-time Provincial Executive (P.E.) members who passed away in June 2010.

"They were strong activists who fought hard for the rights of the members," says retired HEU servicing rep Janice Broadhurst. "These amazing women paved the way for today's activists."

June Bradbury, (formerly Murdock) worked as a cook at Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital. June held several HEU executive positions. She was a member of the provincial bargaining committee in 1975, the constitution amendments committee in 1978, and served three terms as 1st vice-president on the P.E. – 1972-74, 1974-76 and 1978-80.

Ruby Hardwick started as a care aide at Kimberley Special Care Home (formerly called the Pines), but spent most of her career working as a recreation

co-ordinator. Ruby was one of the first people to help organize the Pines as an HEU facility.

She was secretary-treasurer of Kimberley local for more than 10 years and from 1980-84 she served on the a CCERA bargaining committee (Continuing Care Employee Relations Association whose facilities are now represented by the Health Employers Association of BC).

Ruby held several P.E. positions between 1986 and 1994.

Marion Perry (Kelowna) local passed away peacefully on October 22 at the age of 90. She was a long-time HEU member and activist at Kelowna General Hospital.

Marion worked for many years as a servicing representative in HEU's Okanagan regional office. Kelowna local awards a bursary in her name. Marion was known as a wonderful woman who will be deeply missed by her family, friends and the labour community.

Jo-Ann Fuller died in a tragic on-duty accident on October 19. She and fellow paramedic Ivan Polivka perished when their ambulance plunged into Kennedy Lake, after returning from Port Alberni.

Jo-Ann, aged 59, worked at Tofino General Hospital as a casual admitting/switchboard clerk. She was also a primary care paramedic with the B.C. Ambulance Service in Tofino. Jo-Ann had also been active on her local executive.

There will be a full investigation into the tragic accident.



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HARDWICK

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Ethnic Diversity

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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

Pink Triangle

For support: afraid of being identified, feeling isolated, want to know your rights? Call for information on same-sex benefits, fighting homophobia and discrimination.

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.

PRESS 5

Women's

The HEU Women's Standing Committee works with women's groups, coalitions and other union committees to advance women's social and economic rights. Want to get involved?



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

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