B.C. communities fight to save their hospitals

Victoria's freeze on regional hospital spending has hit every B.C. community north of Vernon and east of Kelowna. Across the province, HEU members are helping to organize community coalitions to save hospital beds and health care jobs.

VICTORIA'S PLAN
How the provincial government predicted the crisis last March.

CLOSING BEDS
How we're organizing against the cuts.

MEETING CULL
Health minister Elizabeth Cull debated the cuts with students at HEU's summer school.

Ending the violence
A new union handbook says we can help end domestic violence while we're on the job.

SAVE CANADA? WE CAN DO IT!
When 3,000 trade unionists met in Vancouver in June for the Canadian Labour Congress convention, they changed their constitution, set out an ambitious action program and elected Bob White as president. His job: help organize a movement to defeat the Tories and build a better Canada. HEU was there.
Health care restructuring is next challenge

HEU is emerging from a long round of collective bargaining facing an even tougher challenge — protecting our health care system and our jobs during a period of fundamental restructuring.

Since the recession of the 1980s, the corporate sector has been complaining about the cost of our health care system and the taxes needed to support it. The federal Tories are cutting off payments to provincial health care budgets. Provincial governments are closing beds, shutting wards and laying off thousands of workers.

But corporate leaders who attack the waste in health care have no intention of spending the savings on quality care, safe working conditions or pay equity. They want that money paid to them in the form of corporation taxes — direct funding to run privatized health services.

The provincial New Democrats, by cutting health spending below the level needed to maintain existing services and improve the jobs of HEU members, were setting our health care system on that corporate course for disaster.

Where is the commitment to universally accessible, quality medical care if rural communities face arbitrary cuts in service? And where is women's equality if health care workers — overwhelmingly women — are thrown on the unemployment lists by restructuring?

HEU has never stood in the way of changes designed to improve our medicare system. HEU members know that major changes are needed. But those changes must meet the needs of our communities and protect the jobs of HEU members.

Even before our collective bargaining process wound down, HEU activists were turning their attention to the community coalition work needed to protect basic services around the province.

In the process, they're confronting basic questions about the kind of medi-care system we want to leave to our children. Is health care spending out of control? What kind of community care is needed? And how can communities exert democratic control over health care services?

HEU has made its position clear to Victoria layoffs and bad choices should be rescinded. Community programs must be in place before services are cut. Existing health workers must be offered those jobs and be trained to fill them. Meeting those needs will just be the beginning.

In the coming months — especially at our upcoming convention — HEU members will have to work with friends in the community and in health coalitions across the country to develop a plan for health care that meets peoples' needs, not the bottom-line obsession of the corporate sector.

Comment by Carmela Allevato

...while all eyes are on the constitution...


Letters

Thank you for the pay equity quilt

I was very impressed by the cover of the December Guardian. Any information you may have regarding this lovely and timely quilt on pay equity would be much appreciated, as it is possible to get a poster of this for framing.

Although I no longer work in a hospital, finding it too stressful, I still enjoy receiving the Guardian. At present I am doing a job in another union through the job I now have. However, I share my copies of the Guardian with other union members in that union and workers should be aware of other struggles and victories in the union movement.

Anne Spiker, Nanaimo

Sure, at present we do not have a poster of this quilt, but we are discussing the possibility of producing a poster with posters by Debbie Bryant and other artists.

HEU member angry at WCB attitude

Following is a letter to the "Workers' Compensation Board in reaction to the recent investigation of a complaint about a kitchen worker passed out because of heat in the kitchen. A union rep called for an inspection met with some resistance.

'I realize the WCB is a busy place, but I thought someone passing out from the heat would have been a call for immediate action. What a joke! Not only does the employer not care, but it seems those who are there to help workers didn't care either.

Our employer thought that putting a small three-speed fan in the kitchen would help. Another joke! I want to know what it takes before the average worker gets help. We deal with conditions like unbearable heat in a tub room trying to wash uncooperative patients, heavy workloads, violent patients, lifting posts much heavier than the required weight limit, and doing jobs on a wet, wet, wet WCB. We look in the mirror and see just what we are facing. Yes, the employer seems to think these are just things that we have to put up with. However, we in the health care industry do not! These things are just as much in our minds as in the heat.

Unless an employer is actually hit, or has to lift a heavy post, or work around hot dryers all day, he thinks there are no problems. Again, I say what a joke! Please don't tell us that if we don't like it we should get another job. That is not the solution. We're doing jobs in health care because we care about the sick, elderly, lonely, etc. Our problems are real and it's up to the WCB to get this across to the employer.

After all, doesn't the WCB stand for workers?'

Kim Gammon, Burnaby

Guardian

To humbly dedicate to all those who tell the truth.}

EDITOR

Graeme Heath ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Chris Grace DESIGN CONSULTANT

Kris Dailey PRODUCTION & PRINTING

Brenda Bowers REVOLUTION PRINTS

SOUTHERN CAROLINA

The Hospital Guardian is published 4 times a year, in March, June, September and December. It is published on behalf of the Provincial Association of the Hospital Employees Unions, under the direction of an Editorial Committee consisting of

Bill Macdonald, President

Geraldine Edmonds, Vice-President

Jim Kowalchuk, Secretary-Treasurer

Gary Mitchell, Advisory Commodities

Tom Kowalchuk, Finance Officer


Choice coalition appreciates HEU support

The B.C. Coalition for Abortion Clinics wishes to thank HEU in the most heartfelt manner for the ways in which you have supported the activities of the coalition and the pro Choice movement.

Your support has been expressed in many ways and we are grateful for all of them. But particularly, we want to thank your members for their strong support as marshals for our events. We very much need this type of support and we also know we can count on the discipline and calmness of union members when they act as part of a marshalling team.

Thank you for your commitment and for demonstrating once again the ways in which the union movement can contribute so effectively to making change.

B.C. COALITION FOR choice on abortion, Vancouver,

G U A R D I A N  • July/August 1992

CALM

ACPS

Publication Mail Registration pending
HEU sponsors delegates to gay, lesbian conference

HEU is sponsoring 10 delegates, two from each region, to attend the 1992 National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Second Pan-Canadian Conference on Lesbian and Gay Rights in Vancouver. The three-day meeting, from Oct. 9 to 11, will revolve around workshops and group discussions on six theme areas, including topics like AIDS/HIV and the law, and Mobilizing for Change.

The Provincial Executive has asked locals to inform members who would be interested in attending to submit their applications to the Provincial Office.

Conference organizers say the national gathering, called Outright/Lesbian/Gay Rights Visibility, has been developed with input from gay men and lesbians from coast to coast. The goal is a conference "to forge alliances and develop strategies to carry the lesbian and gay rights movement into the future."

Bella Maud
nominated as HEU rep on northwest review team

HEU staff representative Bella Maud has been nominated to represent HEU on a special Ministry of Health team to review funding cuts in the Kitimat-Terrace-Prince Rupert area.

Health minister Elizabeth Cull agreed late in June to ask each of the three major health care unions to appoint a member to the team, which will examine the funding crisis in the northwest. Maud was an HEU activist at St. Joseph's Hospital where she worked as a staffing clerk for a number of years before joining HEU staff in 1979.

Terry Griffin
appointed HEU rep-organizer

Terry Griffin, formerly chairperson of HEU's Red Cross local in Vancouver, has been appointed a rep-organizer based in the Provincial Office. Griffin was a member of the 1992 Bargaining Committee and has been an HEU activist for a number of years.

HEU action
prompts benefits for terminally ill

Here's a reminder that the HURA health and benefits plan has been amended to provide a new provision for terminally ill members. As a result of the changes, which were won thanks to action by members of HEU's Cancer Control local, such members will be entitled to receive up to 100 per cent of their group life insurance benefits under certain conditions. The partial payment of life insurance benefits is meant to help with the heavy costs associated with terminal illness. Working with Cancer Control management, HEU local members investigated Living Benefits with Vancouver AIDS Support Group. The matter was taken to HURA and the plan amended accordingly, thanks in part to the local's initiative.

Gibsons members
support pulp strike pickets

HEU members in the Gibsons district shore off their picket signs early in July to join striking pulp workers on strike at Port Mellon. By adding a few words to HEU picket signs, they were able to convert them to read "HEU supports CPU strikers." The solidarity action won good local press coverage. Cost on page 4.

MESSAGE FOR MIKE: HEU members joined other health care workers and concerned citizens in a demonstration during Prince Rupert's Civic Day parade in June to remind premier Mike Harcourt that the government is opposed to bed closures and layoffs.

Long-term care workers approve new contracts

Solid strike votes and strong support for HEU's job action against the Health Labour Relations Association have helped produce new contracts for the union's long-term care members.

About 3,500 HEU members working in facilities represented by the Nursing Care Employee Relations Association ratified the deal by a 94 per cent margin on July 14.

Then 1,180 HEU members working in 21 privately-run facilities represented by B.C. Private approved a similar deal by a 92 per cent margin July 24.

Both the CCSCA and Prico contracts provide for a three-year agreement and include special pay adjustments won to bridge the wage gap with the master agreement. Workers will also receive wage increases of 33 cents-an-hour in the first year, 33 cents-an-hour plus one per cent in the second year, and a wage repon for the third year. Pay equity clauses will equal those won in the HURA contract.

The determination of long-term care members in the Gibsons district dusted off their picket signs early in July to join striking pulp workers on strike at Port Mellon. By adding a few words to HEU picket signs, they were able to convert them to read "HEU supports CPU strikers." The solidarity action won good local press coverage.

Cost on page 4.

UBC, GVHS members win master agreement deal

Two locals of HEU members who have long demanded to be included under the master collective agreement finally have their wish. The report by mediator Don Mowbray which provided a basis for settlement of the master collective agreement with the Health Labour Relations Association left out those and several other locals.

UBC's Provincial Executive demanded a resolution to renew job action by 600 UBC local members May 20 and mediator Vince Ready was brought into the talks. Rotating job action resumed June 5. The next day, HEU's Provincial Executive announced HEU had at last agreed to bring UBC under the master.

The 23 members of UBC's GVHS Fire and Security local also faced a struggle to get justice. Management-inspired layoff rumors were constituted by a media campaign and those workers won inclusion in the master June 3.
NO BOMBS: HEU members were among almost 120 Vancouversites who turned out May 20 to protest the bombing of the Morgenthau abortion clinic earlier that week in Toronto.

What we’re up to

Cont. from page 3

Three-union action saves GVHS jobs
Quick joint action by HEU, BCNU and HSA helped save the jobs of Greater Victoria Hospital Society’s five and security officers threatened by layoffs.

GVHS advised the fire and security officers, all members of HEU, that 20 per cent of them would be laid off early in June. The move came days before the HEU members were to begin talks to bring their local under the HLRA master collective agreement.

When the three unions learned of the action, they sent a joint statement to health minister Elizabeth Call in which the minister promised that all review teams would include “union personnel.” Herbach demanded an early meeting between unions at the hospital and the administration to implement the proper review team composition.

HeU’s local union represented the special team organized for the nonunionized GVHS.

Suze Kligour joins HEU research team
Suze Kligour, a veteran organizer and researcher in B.C.’s drug dependency movement, joined HEU’s research staff in June. Kligour worked from 1983 to 1991 with the Tenants’ Rights Action Centre (TRAC) as an advocate, writer and researcher. Before that, she trained as a legal assistant and worked for legal services for several years.

In 1991, she was appointed on the planning board of the Plain Language Institute, a provincially-funded body which analyzes government, business and community communications with a view to making them accessible to the average person. This includes the tough job of making laws clearly understandable to average citizens.

Rolfe returns to HEU after wounds
HEU veteran Bill Rolfe returned to the staff full-time in July after completing a one-year leave of absence.
During that time, Rolfe worked with the Workers’ Compensation Board as a labour member of the board of review.
Upon his return, Rolfe was appointed to head the union’s dispute resolution department. He also is assisting the UBC and Shaughnessy lo- cals in negotiations with their employer on merger of the two faculties.

Holy Family layoffs spark workload crisis
HEU members at Vancouver’s Holy Family Hospital are hoping for a promised visit to their facility by health minister Elisabeth Call will win a reversal of layoff notices for 23 workers, including 17 nursing staff.
Holy Family care aide Kay Taughen won the commitment from Call during an exchange at HEU’s summer school June 16.
While HEU members around B.C. grapple with budget freezes, bad closures and layoffs, Holy Family workers are fighting with a work- load crisis caused by sweeping layoffs and a reduction in beds.
The 230-bed long-term care and rehabilitation facility gave its nurses a raise average increase of 12.5 per cent in 1991. It received a 4.6 per cent funding increase in 1991/1992 and a further 3.9 per cent for 1992/1993. Despite the increases, the hospital projected a $640,000 deficit on its $12.6 million budget.
“He Holy Family already was one of the most dangerous facilities in the province to work in,” said HEU secretary-business manager Car- mela Allegra. “In 1990, more than 30 per cent of our members there filed a WCB or long-term disability claim, twice the rate of other Van- couver hospitals.
“Now the employer is cutting out 23 more people and expecting those who remain to pick up the slack. It’s a policy that threatens the well-being both of the patients and the workers.”
HEU members have grieved the layoffs and demanded a full meet- ing with the facility’s board to demand their removal. The lay-offs are re- ceived, HEU also is seeking a special health ministry review team with union involvement to get to the bot- tom of the financial crisis.
At the hospital’s 40th anniversary celebrations June 15, about 35 HEU members donned placards in silent protest outside the gates. They also lobbied board members of NDP MLA Bernie Simpson for action to stop the job losses.

But the layoffs have continued and the workload is steadily in- creasing. Care aides have been told to ration rubber gloves and diapers in an effort to cut costs.
A local meeting July 8 agreed to resist management’s efforts to spread the extra load among the remaining workers. Dietary staff, for example, are now expected to do the work of a full-time cook who was a victim of the cuts.
Other consequences of the cuts include:
• deterioration of the cleanliness of the facility because of layoffs of maintenance workers;
• speed-up for remaining LPNs and care aides, who already were stretched thin;
• speed-up in the kitchen, where a full-time cook has been eliminated.

Shaughnessy members seek voice in hospital’s future
HEU’s Shaughnessy local mem- bers are making some gains in their campaign to be included in discus- sions on the future of their Van- couver workplace.
The local learned earlier this year that the Greater Vancouver Hospi- tal District was considering a wide- range of options for the facility, in- cluding a recommendation to slash the facility to 240 beds from its cur- rent level of 420.
In a meeting July 10 with Van- couver NDP MP Tom Perry, Upland Downey, Glen Clark and J. Mac- Phail — and representatives of several others — a joint HEU-BCNU delegation demanded creation of a comprehensive hospital development plan that protects health workers’ jobs.
“We were not included in any of the discussions, but we’re the first to be thrown out the door,” HEU member John McKenzie told the politicians. “Shaughnessy should not be eliminated. If there are changes, if the government is going to move to community care, consult us at every step and assure us that those being displaced will be hired in the community.
Licensed practical nurse Sarah Drummond warned that LPNs’ “jobs are at stake, we are being laid off wholesale. Please reconsider and take another look before you close beds.”
“Upland and I used to walk all my life, I’m a single mother and I’m getting to the age of retiring,” said cook Sylvia Hill. “I won’t get another job if I’m laid off.”
Within days of the meeting, Shaughnessy’s administration of- fered HEU a full briefing on the changes. MLA Tom Perry also promised to intervene with the hospital to investigate the threatened layoffs.
The local’s campaign has in- cluded submissions to Vancouver City Council, which has suggested the union’s call for full consultation before any changes are made to Shaughnessy.

The HEU convention deadlines
The deadline for submission of constitutional amendments to the upcoming convention of the HEU was July 1, the date reported in the last issue of the Guardian.
The deadline for submission of resolutions to the convention was Aug. 6.
The last issue of the Guardian carried incorrect dates for conven- tion deadlines. Correct dates, how- ever, were communicated to locals in a letter to secrecy-treasurer. We apologize for any confusion arising from the error.
The Wage Policy Conference, originally scheduled has been can- celled.

GUARDIAN • July/August 1992
By GEOFF MEGGS

The Gill wave of bed closures and layoffs now sweeping B.C.'s regional hospital system was anticipated by the provincial government and predicted in the March 26 budget.

Finance minister Glen Clark made much of the stiff spending curbs imposed on other ministries and the funding increases awarded to health, education and social services. But he knew his budget would mean reduced services and lost jobs in many areas.

It is true, as Health minister Elizabeth Cull has pointed out, that B.C.'s health spending increases were the largest in Canada. Yet in the fine print of the Budget Briefing Package, the government acknowledged that the funds allocated to hospital spending would not be enough to maintain existing services.

Although overall health spending was increased by 7.4 per cent, both the Medical Services Plan, which covers payments to doctors, and the Hospital Care Division, which funds hospitals, were offered only 5 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively.

The money saved was shifted to community care. Why? Because "this kind of shift has been strongly endorsed by the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs and also reflects the priorities for health care that have been set by the present government."

"Hospitals will be receiving less funding than they desire," said budget background documents. "As a result, hospitals may have to close beds."

And what of the workers? "The background papers stated bluntly that "there will be staff displacement from the hospitals affected and not all of the staff will be able to be hired on the community side due to different skill requirements."

The government said blandly it "planned that a labour adjustment strategy will be developed over the next few months."

In effect, the government committed itself to fundamental changes proposed by the Royal Commission almost nine months before its consultative process was to submit an action plan on the commission to cabinet. Saving money — not quality health care — was the motive.

The result has been unemployment for hundreds of health care workers and politicial upheaval in northern communities.

By early June, northern NDP MLA's were telling Clark and Cull there was big trouble in their home towns. Communities were organizing and B.C.'s three major health unions were outspoken in their criticism of the "labour adjustment strategy" that never existed.

The New Democrats now are trying some damage control. Deputy health minister Krysia Stawarczyk was dismissed and Cull convinced Peter Cameron, executive director of the Health Sciences Association, to become an assistant deputy minister with a mandate to develop the labour adjustment strategy.

Both Cull and Clark have bailed Cameron's July 10 appointment as proof of the government's determination to bring the crisis under control.

Clark candidly admits that his financial concerns outstriped the health ministry's policy process. In other words, he imposed the Royal Commission recommendations before any serious consultation had occurred. But the March 26 plan outlined in the budget remains in place.

Will be slow down, provide the funds necessary to stabilize communities facing cuts, allow consultation and insist on a properly funded labour strategy? If not, Cull and Cameron face an unenviable task.

**LOOK BACK**

‘200 women, two toilets’

We need your help to save the stories of HEU pioneers

By TRISH WEBB

The early days of HEU — when the foundations were laid for what is now one of B.C.'s largest unions — are in danger of being forgotten forever.

Union founders Alec Paterson and Vernon Black, parents of twins years ago. Many of the women and men who fought hard to stop the abuses suffered by health care workers in the 1940s and 1950s are also gone. Their stories have died with them.

Acting on a HEU convention resolution, the Provincial Executives began to gather the threads of HEU's history. But what seemed like at straightforward job began to turn sour.

There have been some exciting discoveries and some terrible setbacks.

I spent the month of June researching out elderly people and old documents. I met Brimacombe who worked in the laundry at VGH in 1935. She noticed a big change in the way workers were treated after the union was formed.

"Before the union we worked 10 hours a day, and if they felt like giving us half a day off we got it," she said. "If they didn't feel like it, well to back with you, you didn't get it."

Working conditions improved, too, and Brimacombe had a hand in making sure they did.

"The first time I managed to go to a union meeting — and it wasn't easy because I had young kids at home — but the first time I got right up in the union meeting and I told them about the women's lavatories," Joan said.

"There might have been 150 or 200 women that worked in the main building, and they had one bathroom in the basement with two lavatories and one washbasin.

"When I told them at the union meeting those two — Alec and Bill Black — had the nerve to tell me I was lying." Brimacombe convinced the two women to come and look for themselves.

The next day they showed up at the women's washrooms and gave them a tour.

"They took one look at that and went right upstairs and reported it to the administrator. And he accused them of lying! So Alec said 'come downstairs and have a look for yourself.'"

"He came downstairs, he didn't have much choice. He couldn't believe his eyes. He said, 'I can't do anything about that today, but I guarantee that before this year is out, the women will have a proper place in this building.'

"The conditions were horrible until we got a union. It took the union to mend it," she said.

During the last 50 years the union has grown from a few hundred to almost 35,000 members.

Minute books and memories hint at the events that led a group of "lay workers" at Vancouver General Hospital to build a union that would fight for dignity, decent wages and safe working conditions for health care workers throughout the province.

Government archives, union archives, UBC special collections, newspaper clippings, hospital records, personal memories, Guardian, old photographs, organizing brochures, minute books — these are the only sources of information about HEU's early years. Any help you can give to verify facts or provide personal anecdotes will be appreciated.

Right now I am searching for information about organizing drives outside the Fraser Valley.

Anyone with photographs of hospitals at the time they were organized, stories about key players, old documents, and first contact strategies is urged to contact me at Provincial Office.

Vancouver journalist Trish Webb is researching and writing a history of the HEU. Contact her at 734-3435 if you have memories, pictures or documents from our union's past.
She handles the retro! Payroll clerk does key job

It's been a busy summer for payroll clerks across the province like Linda Layton, of Queenel's O.R. Baker Hospital.

New wage rates from the three contract settlements with the health care unions have to be entered, pay equity adjustments made and retro-active pay calculated.

At some hospitals with computerized payroll systems, the calculations have to be made manually.

Layton has just finished keying in the new HLRA rates for HEU members on her B.C. Health System's software. The pay boosts won in the union's long struggle for a fair settlement will be on members' paycheques for the last payroll in July. Then she turns to calculating retro pay for HEU members, which she hopes to get done as soon as possible.

The employer doesn't provide any additional help for her to enter rate changes and calculate back pay. She has to let other parts of her job slide. A resident of Lillooet for 36 years, Layton, her husband and two teenage daughters moved to Queenel four years ago. With three years of CCA training by correspondence and seven years of accounting and payroll experience at a Lillooet forest products company, she quickly applied for a job at O.R. Baker.

For Layton, on the job also means being active in the union. She was elected secretary-treasurer of the Queenel local in January, and took an active role in job action and essential services hearings. Now she's involved in the campaign to fight hospital closures and layoffs in northern communities.

She describes this as a good learning experience. "If you're going to be in a union, you have to get involved so you can have your say and be part of change."

Accordian master Gerry Olsen
HEU member's musical gift

Ever since the days of his Stuart Island childhood, when fishermen, loggers and their families crowded the community hall for a weekend dance, Gerry Olsen has loved the accordion.

His father, his mother and two uncles could really make the instrument perform and their skills were in demand in their little Gulf Island community near the Yukon.

But it wasn't until his late teens - in 1953, to be exact - that Olsen himself picked up an accordion and found he could sing out a tune.

Today, Gerry Olsen is a maintenance worker and secretary-treasurer of his HEU local during his working day at Vancouver's Central City Mission, an intermediate care and alcohol rehabilitation facility in Gastown.

But after the shift, he's a champion accordion player who has carried off several first place trophies at Kimberley's internationally-renowned accordion competitions.

"Performing is pretty tense," Olsen says, "but the most enjoyable part is getting out of playing in a room full of accordion players. We just pick up and play for each other - a shared joy."

His first encounter with the instrument was so successful his mother insisted he take lessons. The family had moved to the Lower Mainland by then and Vancouver boasted many teachers.

"It was the Golden Age of accordians," Olsen recalls, when famous accordion players were the lead performers on the Ed Sullivan show. During the next 20 years, Olsen performed his skills in private, seldom performing.

But when a friend came back from Kimberley with a trophy in 1984, Olsen decided to take up the challenge. In five trips to the contest, he won three first-place trophies and two seconds.

The competition, which draws entrants from all over North America and parts of Europe, is a deadly serious affair. Five judges evaluate: technical control, phrasing and stage presence, while two dancers assess what it's like to dance to. Accordian practice consumed several hours every day at peak periods until just a few weeks before this year's competition.

On the last day of the competition, Olsen was sent out to applied his skill and a lone accordionist has to make the best of what he has. Olsen says, "It's an art form, and it's a piece of art that we have to protect."

ARMLOAD OF PRIZES: Gerry Olsen, of Central City Mission local, plays accordion like a champion.

The Guardian judged best of its class

IT IS just two years since the Guardian Editorial Committee set down to undertake an ambitious redesign of the Guardian's flagship publication. Your committee wanted a more modern, professional-looking paper.

That meant more frequent publication, more news from the local and more opportunities for members to speak their minds. We switched to a more environmentally-friendly format and began mailing the paper to every HEU member.

The change has been challenging, but HEU membership response was positive.

Last month, the Canadian Association of Labour Magazines added its vote of approval by naming the Guardian the best provincial labour publication in Canada.

In a national competition judged by Vancouver Sun labour columnist Valerio Cassinni, the Guardian took the prize for best overall publication, excellence in news coverage and excellence in layout and design.

Those responsible for the news coverage are pretty easy to recognize by their names at top of major stories.

But the credit for the paper's layout and design belongs to two people whose names are buried on the paper's masthead. One is designer Kris Klassen, who converted your Editorial Committee's needs into an exciting design.

The other is Carol Bjarnason, the HEU staff member who produces every page of the paper on a desktop computer to a professional standard seldom found outside a commercial printshop.

Thanks to both of them. As for the credit for overall excellence, that clearly belongs to you, the members of HEU, whose struggles, victories, aspirations and concerns make for such interesting journalism.

Mailing list the target of a major overhaul

That's not to say we've produced a perfect publication. Readers are angry and frustrated by problems with our mailing list and they have every right to be.

HEU's mailing list is based on lists provided every six months by individual employees. They often are out-of-date before they arrive. Because some HEU members are employed at more than one facility, they may appear more than once - and get more than one paper!

The list is now loaded on HEU's computer system and development of programs to eliminate these problems is a top priority.

You can help: tell us when you move; tell us if you are getting more than one paper (or no paper); urge your employer to provide up-to-date and accurate information.

The result will be better service and less wasted paper.
Labour

Bank workers beat the Commerce

They were on strike for almost five months, but in the end, 22 women workers at the Powell River branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce won a contract that gave them almost everything they were asking for. The bank workers' winter-long struggle was about fairness and basic rights. Here's what the women won in their new contract:
- casual recall based on seniority
- wage increases of 4.8 and 3 per cent and
- language to protect against sexual harassment.

When the strike first started, last November, things looked tough for the women. The bank brought in scabs from Vancouver, and hired a private detective to keep an eye on the picket line. The two sides seemed unevenly matched. Once again, a small band of women were up against one of the country's richest corporations. But the strikers had community support on their side. Millions of dollars were transferred to other financial institutions by individuals and businesses. The return to the bargaining table when the women's union, the B.C. Government Employees, began talking plans for a province-wide boycott of the bank.

The first demonstration was planned for April 13 at the bank's regional office in Vancouver, but on April 11, the bank agreed to a new contract.

Nova Scotia rallies for Westray families

At 5:16 in the morning on May 9, a massive explosion blew through the Westray mine near Plymouth, Nova Scotia, about 350 miles east of Halifax, with a roar that would be heard a kilometre away. Its swirling force turned the mine tunnel into a giant gun barrel with the coal dust as the gunpowder. It would blow holes through the roof of the minefield two kilometres away, smash every heavy steel ventilation outlet, toss around heavy tractors and create massive cave-ins.

In the southwestern part of the mine where 11 miners were working, huge amounts of lethal carbon monoxide and methane poured into the tunnels, along with a huge coal-dust fireball, sucking out all the oxygen in the air.

The miners were killed instantly. One man would be found by rescuers two days later with his hands still gripping the steering wheel of his vehicle.

The 13 men whose bodies were recovered in that part of the mine never even had a chance to reach for their filtration masks. The other 15 who died in the blast, 11 of whom are still in the mine, probably met similar sudden deaths.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Labour has set up the Westray Disaster Memorial Education Fund. It will be for the children's training or education beyond public school.

Contributions may be sent to: The Westray Disaster Memorial Education Fund, 3790 Kempt Road, Suite 212, Halifax, N.S., E3K 4X8. For more information (902) 454-6735.

The names of the Westray dead are: John Bates, 50; Larry Bell, 25; Benno Bennet, 42; Wayne Conway, 38; Ferris Davan, 35; Adonis Delbonnet, 36; Robert Doyle, 22; Reni Drodol, 38; Roy Foylimate, 33; Robert Fraser, 58; Myles Gillis, 32; John Hallouman, 33; Randolph House, 47; Trevor Jahn, 35; Lawrence James, 34; Eugene Johnson, 33; Stephen Lutley, 46; Glenn Martin, 36; Michael MacKay, 38; Angus MacNeil, 39; Harry McCallum, 41; Eric McFarlane, 38; George Monroe, 38; Danny Poglar, 38; Romeo Short, 35; Peter Vickam, 36.

New Brunswick CUPE workers win fight to protect contract

A bold, province-wide strike by 20,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees in New Brunswick has forced the McKenna government to honour contracts broken last year in the name of restraint.

Wage increases and benefits contained in the contracts will be paid as negotiated. In return, the CUPE members agreed to accept modified restraint measures once the contracts expire.

It took an unprecedented display of solidarity by CUPE members across the province, along with the backing of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, to change the government's mind.

The government employees first walked out June 1, vowing not to return until their contracts were honoured. That walkout was cut short after nine hours when a tentative agreement was signed.

However, the agreement stopped short of honouring contracts in full, and the strike resumed three days later when CUPE members across the province overwhelmingly rejected the deal.

Schools were shut down, liquor stores were closed, municipal services were interrupted and activities at hospitals and nursing homes were restricted to essential services.

Members of several other unions walked out in sympathy, including workers at N.B. Coal and NBTel, and PSAC members in the main federal building in Saint John.

After four days of strikes, then eight days of mediation, including two face-to-face meetings between premier Frank McKenna and CUPE president Judy Darcy, a settlement was reached, and then ratified by the members.

The showdown was viewed by many as the first real display of opposition to the McKenna government since it swept to power by winning every seat in the legislature five years ago.

Darcy warned that "governments all across Canada should realize that legislated controls inevitably result in conflict." She added "The successful outcome of this dispute shows that free collective bargaining must be allowed to work, even in the midst of a recession."

NY hospital pact saves jobs

New York's militant local 1199 of the Drug, Hospital and Health Care Employees' Union has won a breakthrough 40-month contract that virtually guarantees 65,000 workers a job for the life of the deal.

The union, which fought a tough strike against the same employers just three years ago, also won pay raises of 12 per cent over three years and improved benefits.

Under the pact, a housekeeper's salary will rise to an average U.S. $13,049 from $12,426. A nursing assistant's salary will rise to $24,247 from $22,635.

Union president Dennis Rivers said the agreement marked a "historic moment" for his members, who now will have first right to job openings at any of 55 hospitals covered by the contract.

While waiting for an opening, laid off workers will have improved unemployment benefits or retaining.

To tighten the system, no hospital seeking to fill a vacancy will be allowed to do so without first offering the job to those already laid off.

The union also agreed to participate in joint committees with employers to resolve major grievances and to improve patient care.
From Prince Rupert to the Okanagan, HEU members are organizing in the community to stop bed closures, layoffs

Closing beds

FACING THE COMMUNITY: The funding crisis in Prince Rupert, Terrace and Kitimat brought health minister Elizabeth Cull to Terrace to meet local coalition representatives, including HEU's Cindy Russell (centre), from Kitimat, and Elaine Pigeau (right), of Terrace.

By STEPHEN HOWARD

HEU and local union activists are leading the fight against massive bed closures, layoffs and cuts to vital health care services that are being implemented in many B.C. communities.

In the last 10 months, 625 beds have been closed and 566 health care workers laid off across the province, with provincial government funding cuts to blame for most of the damage. Since April 1 alone, 363 beds have been closed and 313 workers laid off.

While government funding boosts for hospitals averaged 3.4 per cent province-wide this year, there were widespread differences in what individual facilities received as Victoria used the budget process to implement recommendations of the Royal Commission. Communities in the North were hardest hit as all but three of about 30 northern hospitals received a zero per cent increase. Facilities in the Okanagan outside Kelowna and Penticton, and in the Kootenays were also hit hard, receiving increases between zero and one per cent.

The impact of the cuts on northern communities like Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace and Kitimat has been severe.

HEU responded quickly to the funding crisis in the North. HEU activists joined BCU and HSA members to form community-based health care action committees in many northern communities to educate the public about the cuts, organize community opposition through petition campaigns, and press the government for fair funding.

HEU's Provincial Executive also approved a plan to provide resources to local campaigns and to coordinate a provincial fightback strategy with HSA and BCU.

The local committees are demanding that health minister Elizabeth Cull hold special reviews for northern hospitals to investigate the funding crisis. Until the reviews are complete, the committees want Cull to restore services, reopen closed beds and freeze the layoffs.

The community-based campaigns are gaining real momentum. Intense political pressure from northwestern B.C. residents has already forced Cull to appoint a special review for hospitals in Kitimat, Prince Rupert and Terrace.

The northwest review team includes a representative from each of the three health care unions, and should begin its investigation of the funding crisis faced by the three-area hospitals shortly.

Recently, about 40 health care and community activists from almost every town between Prince George and Prince Rupert held a special strategy session July 13 in Terrace. They adopted a new action plan to keep up political pressure for fair hospital funding and to continue building community support across the North.

Also on July 13, the Prince George action committee convinced city council to support the campaign for fair funding. After hearing a special joint presentation from local representatives of HEU, BCU and HSA about the crisis situation at Prince George Regional Hospital, where 61 beds were closed and 100 care givers laid off, council voted to demand a special review of hospital funding.

The mayor promised to personally deliver council's message to health minister Cull.

When the new NDP government unveiled its first budget March 26, the 5.2 per cent increase for hospital funding seemed healthy. But behind the scenes, important political decisions about allocating the increase had already been made as early as December by government officials. Millions were diverted to fund community services, cancer research and treatment and other programs. What was left over -- 3.4 per cent -- wasn't enough to maintain the same level of services at all facilities, the minister said. Her goal was to treat hospitals "fairly, not equally."

It wasn't until mid-April, while HEU was locked in battle with the NDP and health employers for a fair contract settlement, that the first warning signs of the funding crisis emerged. When hospitals received notice of their budget allocations for 1992/93, the alarm bells went off.

Northern hospital administrators began calculating the damage from Cull's version of fairness: Prince George Regional, a $4.7 million deficit; $500,000 deficits at hospitals in Kitimat, Terrace, and Williams Lake; close to $1 million in Prince Rupert; and about a $2 million shortfall in Vernon, just to name a few.

Then the axess fell. Service cuts, bed closures and layoffs were approved by hospital boards to meet the Ministry of Health's May 29 deadline for submitting balanced budgets.

Northwest residents were the first to voice their anger about the bed closures, layoffs and service cuts. More than 500 people packed into a sold-out hospital funding in Terrace May 22. A week later 400 people took part in a similar protest in Prince Rupert.

Local action committees in these two communities and Kitimat launched successful petition campaigns, collecting more than 20,000 signatures before the end of June.

Northwest residents have deep concerns about the cuts -- shared by all northern communities -- that are based on historic social and economic disparities between the North and the Lower Mainland.

TAKING THE MESSAGE TO THE TOP: Queenel health care activists Linda Layton (left) of HEU and BCU, and Laura Lalande (centre) made sure that premier Marcaurth heard firsthand about the severe impact of NDP funding cuts on the North when he arrived in town to open a local festival in July.

The damage so far:

Massive bed closures and layoffs in the last 10 months mean many B.C. communities have lost vital health care services which could cause a loss of public confidence in the big changes for the health care system being considered by health minister Elizabeth Cull. Here are the details:

• 632 BEDS CLOSED since October 1991 made up of 363 beds closed by government funding cuts since April 1, and 269 beds closed from restructuring recommended by Royal Commission on Health Care.

• 566 LAYOFFS of HEU, HSA, and BCU members, with 313 workers laid off since April 1 because of funding cuts, and 253 workers laid off due to restructuring.

Statistics compiled by HEU, HSA and BCU.

HEAVY CUTS face Terrace Mills Memorial Hospital unless Victoria provides more funds.
They're worried the bed closures and service cuts will have a domino effect on care in their communities. They fear losing the specialized care services that allow them to be treated closer to home in their own communities. If those services also disappear, northern residents will have to travel to Vancouver at great personal expense and disruption to receive necessary medical care.

Other fightback campaigns are under way across the North. The Prince George action committee has created a wave of public anger and is mounting last-minute pressure to force Call to announce a special review for their hospital before the end of July.

In Vernon, the local Committee to Save Our Hospital held a public forum June 22, while the Kitimat campaign delivered a strong message to premier Harper when he was on hand to open the local Billy Barker Days festivities July 18.

Even small communities have been active. In Fort St. James, about a two-hour drive north of Prince George, more than 1,000 residents signed a petition demanding fair funding for their health care facility.

Call was quick to single out bad administrators as the cause of the problems. Northern activists agreed that bad administrators are a problem in all facilities across the province. But they told Call that government cuts, not bad bosses, are responsible for the crisis. Besides, they demanded to know, if bad administrators are to blame, then why hasn't Call fired them?

The government tried to play up the increased funding to community-based services to deflect heat about the cuts. But this was shut down by local media, and even by an NDP MLA. In a stinging editorial, a Terrace newspaper branded the money juggling as "voodoo at work," while MLA Helmut Giesbrecht (NDP Skeena) called his government's action "a shell game."

**WHAT ACTION ARE WE TAKING?**

EU's Provincial Executive has approved an action plan to fight bed closures and layoffs around the province and to make sure the public has a voice in the massive Royal Commission health care changes being considered by the government. Here are the goals of the campaign:

- urge HEU members in the fight to maintain vital health care services and jobs for their communities;
- increase public awareness about the cuts and the massive changes in health care now being considered;
- form coalitions with community groups to fight the cuts and to ensure that community health care needs are met by a changing, "closer to home" health care system;
- lobby politicians about the impact of the cuts, the need for proper planning before any changes are made, and for commitment to retaining and job security for existing health care workers affected by the changes.

And here are some of the resources HEU is putting into action:

- special organizers to provide hands-on help for local campaigns;
- communications support for local advertising and media campaigns, and leaflets, postcards, and letters;
- taking local members off the job for local campaign work;
- stepped-up research on the cuts and Royal Commission recommendations;
- a province-wide public opinion poll and a provincial conference being organized with BCNU and HEA.

July/August 1992 • GUARDIAN
"Where do we go from here?"

AN EXCERPT FROM BOB WHITE'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

HE power structure in our society, including many editors of major newspapers, will raise and raise that universal health care system from funding cuts, privatisation and the impact of free trade.

Three thousand Canadian trade unionists gathered for the Canadian Labour Congress convention in Vancouver June 8 and answered "we can do it. We can do that and more."

Among them were 46 delegates from across B.C. who played their part in what became a turning point convention for Canada's labour movement. When the delegates adjourned June 13, they had transformed the Congress with fundamental changes which included:

- changes in the CLC constitution to ensure that all provinces and large unions are represented in an executive whose top officers are elected in the most democratic possible fashion;
- election of a new leadership including one vice-president opposed by many of labour's establishment figures to committed to a new direction for the Congress; and
- adoption of an action plan that clearly links labour with broad community coalitions and the New Democratic Party in a campaign to save a united, prosperous Canada.

The economic and political chaos engulfing the country "is not happening by accident," newly elected president Bob White, former president of the Canadian Autoworkers, told the convention.

"The vast majority of what has taken place is the direct result of a Tory- corporate agenda that uses trade and monetary policies to deliberately reshape our economy which would improve the living standards of workers in other countries while at the same time not result in hundreds of thousands of Canadian families going through the struggles of unemployment."

"It is not living in the past to advocate that universal medicare is a fundamental right in our society and that we will fight like hell to make it better and against anyone political who advocates policies that start to dismantle it.

It is not living in the past to say that we want and need a well-educated, well-trained, and responsible for a lot of those costs belong with the employers.

It is not living in the past to call for a full employment policy because it goes hand in hand with a modern, productive society.

It is not living in the past to advocate universal child care in order that children can grow and develop.

BUILDING A BETTER MOVEMENT

Who can save Canada's health care system from funding cuts, privatization and the impact of free trade?

The fight to save medicare is just one item on the agenda of the Canadian Labour Congress.

SHOCK OF VICTORY was obvious on the face of Jean-Claude Parrot (right), president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, when he was re-elected CLC president. Bob White with vice-president Nancy Riche, secretary-treasurer Dick Martin and Parrot.

by GEOFF MEGGS

Debates on women's issues, in which delegates voted to campaign inside and outside the labour movement for an end to violence against women. There were evident above all in the nearly unanimous decision to demand an end to the Free Trade Agreement.

Opposition to free trade is just one aspect of a sweeping economic alternative program the Congress will undertake as part of a series of national political campaigns. The three main elements of the plan include:

- national action to force Ottawa to tear up the Free Trade Agreement and to implement an alternative economic program of full employment;
- a national campaign for the defense and improvement of medicare;
- more pressure to abolish the Goods and Services Tax in favor of a fair taxation program.

"This plan is the culmination of all our work." CLC vice-president Nancy Riche told delegates.
Within days, the QFL formally withdrew from the Congress, leaving the new CLC leaders the task of negotiating a new relationship with the Quebec labour movement. “We have understood the right of Quebec to self-determination,” White told delegates, “and we did not let the corporations divide us. We must find ways to work with Fern Daoust and the QFL in 1992 and beyond.”

What does the convention mean to health care workers in B.C.? Above all, it means a much better chance to defend medicare — and the jobs that go with it — with the backing of a committed, action-oriented labour congress. During the convention, HEU met with health workers from Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario to discuss plans for joint action.

Everywhere the story is the same — a workload crisis compounded by funding cuts, bed closures and layoffs.

Unlike HEU, which is able to strike in support of bargaining demands, most provincial health unions must submit to endless rounds of binding arbitration to win even modest gains. HEU will be working with CUPB during the coming months to consolidate these links to stop up the national fight to save the health care system.

A major target must be the Tory government, which has undercut provincial funding by slashing its transfer payments. The federal election may be the next battleground.

The election of White to replace outgoing president Shirley Carr has already sparked a vicious attack from Canada’s top business leaders, who fear the impact of labour’s new energy. The election of Parrot was proof of the new democracy in the labour movement and the determination of rank-and-file delegates to use it.

Perhaps most important, the convention settled the long-standing debate in the labour movement about the need to work with community coalitions.

HEU had answered that question long ago and HEU members are taking leading roles in community coalitions organized around the province to oppose bed closures and layoffs.

The CLC convention opens the door to coalition politics on a provincial and national scale to defend and expand our medicare system.

QUÉBEC CONTENDER
Guy Cousineau (left) was invited to address HEU delegates as they assessed how they intended to vote in the convention’s key election.
Tight money policy will stay – Cull

Health minister Elizabeth Cull faced some tough questioning from HEU members at summer school and responded with a warning that tough budgets will continue to be a fact of life.

"I understand your frustration, and this is felt in cabinet," Cull said in response to HEU Provincial Executive member Tom Knowles, who said budget cutsbacks are undermining workers’ pride.

"I don’t see a bigger increase for health next year," she warned, but before the next budget, Cull promised to consult with HEU and other affected groups before budget allocations are made, something that didn’t happen before this year’s budget.

In response to questions from members from the Holy Family, Vernon and northern B.C. locals who are dealing with layoffs and bed closures, Cull promised to visit and find out more about the reasons behind the cutbacks.

The minister said she wants to know how a five per cent budget shortfall can lead to closure of 38 per cent of beds. “I think some games are being played," she added.

When member Olga Castrucci of Vancouver General spoke about her frustration with high management salaries and with hospitals' refusals to deal with the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs’ call to use licensed practical nurses, Cull called the salaries “obscene” and said, “There are times in the last few months when I would have liked to fire HRHA.”

Before taking questions, Cull delivered a philosophical speech about the problems she and the NDP government face. “Some have criticized me for moving too fast, others have criticized me for being too slow. There’s probably some truth in both criticisms," she said.

“We’re going to make some mistakes. We probably have made some mistakes.”

Although she won’t be able to do everything she or HEU wants, Cull said she is sure her government can do much better than previous governments.

“I think we will be able to look back in pride at what the government has done to make progressive change in health care.”

HEALTH MINISTER Elizabeth Cull took tough questions at HEU’s summer school.

Finding our friends

Only coalitions can win labour’s goals, says panel

Facing with governments and big business imposing a corporate agenda on Canada, labour must work with community groups to advance an alternate vision for Canada.

Unions and community groups are already working together through the Action Canada Network and on individual issues, panelists told an HEU summer school panel on labour’s agenda for change.

“We must now put forward the vision of the society we want,” said Wayne Bradley of the Campbell River and District Labour Council, who warned that failure to do so will open the door to right-wingers like Preston Manning and the Reform Party. Trade unionists and community groups can unite around single issues, he added.

Along with Canadian Union of Public Employees president Judy Darcy, Simon Fraser University economics professor Michael Leibowitz and Ontario child care advocate Kerry McQuaig and HEU’s Carmela Allavato.

NO RACISM HERE, IS THERE?

An evening-long theatrical presentation at HEU’s summer school drew students into an exploration of racism—and they found it everywhere. Actors (left to right, above) Sophie Merasty, Stephen Hill, Julie Salverson and Celeste Inseil illustrate the pushes and pulls of racism and (right) the denial of those who can’t see others’ pain.

How can unions do it? With coalition-building, says panel

June 19. From left to right, Wayne Bradley, Mike Leibowitz, CUPE president Judy Darcy, Ontario Daycare Coalition director Kerry McQuaig and HEU’s Carmela Allavato.

In order to satisfy capital, the needs of people were given a back seat to an arbitrary deficit figure," Leibowitz said, adding that this means the NDP government is submitting to the corporate agenda.

Corporations are looking for governments to suppress wages and environmental standards, Leibowitz said, resulting in a downward spiral that will benefit no one but the corporations and the rich.

McQuaig said two years of experience with the NDP government in Ontario shows that pressure and lobbying are necessary to get action. The government is moving ahead on child care programs because child care advocates are politically active.
Ending violence against women

A new union guide sets out ways we can help end violence in the home.

Violence against women is pervasive in our society. A new booklet published by the Women’s Research Centre and the B.C. Federation of Labour suggests union strategies for dealing with violence in the workplace, sexual assault, harassment and child abuse. Following is an excerpt:

MOST couples quarrel. Some may shout insults at each other or throw things. Wife assault is something different.

In wife assault, the central issue is power and control. In a battering relationship, the husband uses physical or sexual violence, or psychological abuse to control his wife’s behaviour. And wife assault is a crime.

Each year, one in eight Canadian women is battered by her legal or common-law husband. While some kinds of abuses are more dangerous than others, any form of assault or abuse is serious and needs to be taken seriously.

We have to abandon the attitude that it’s none of our business. Violence against women in relationships is not a private family matter – it concerns us all.

Abuse can take many forms. Physical abuse can be a shove or slap, a punch or a beating. Many women suffer bruises, black eyes, broken bones or other injuries.

Many women are sexually abused – they may be forced to have sex either to avoid being assaulted or after they have been beaten.

Not all abusive relationships are physically or sexually violent. Many women are called names and put down, told they are fat, stupid, ugly or told they are terrible cooks, wives or mothers. Women are often humiliated about imaginary affairs.

Threats are common – a husband may threaten to hurt himself or his wife and children if she tries to leave him.

All these forms of psychological abuse hurt and control women. But women who are psychologically abused may not identify themselves as battered women.

Abuse can start at any time. It may begin soon after a woman marries or moves in with a man. It may start during pregnancy or after the first child is born, and sometimes abuse begins after years of marriage.

Many batters apologize to their wives, promising never to hit them again. Though they may feel remorseful, most batters do not stop without outside intervention.

A husband may tell his wife that the violence is her own fault, that if she were a better wife and mother this wouldn’t happen. Others blame work and money stress for their violence. Many blame alcohol, although men who use this excuse hit their wives when they are sober as well as when they have been drinking. Alcohol is an excuse for violence, not the cause.

Men can take responsibility by confronting other men they suspect or know are being abusive.

There are no acceptable excuses for violence. Batters must take responsibility for their abusive behaviour.

Lack of information is a common experience for women in abusive relationships. Some men who batter control all the family’s money. Even if his wife works outside the home, the husband controls how much she has to spend. Or he may never be available to look after the kids so she can go out. He may phone constantly to keep track of her time. He may be so jealous and possessive it becomes too dangerous for her to go out with friends because when she returns, he beats her and accuses her of having an affair.

Some men belittle their wives in front of family and friends, or otherwise behave so badly that people gravely stop visiting.

All this isolates a woman from the support of friends and family, and makes her more vulnerable to her husband’s negative criticism.

As friends and family, instead of withdrawing because we’re uncomfortable, we can offer support by speaking out about what we see. Men especially can take responsibility by confronting other men who they suspect or know are being abusive.

Within an abusive relationship, women cope as best they can. Some try not to think about what is happening to forget it. Others may use alcohol or prescription drugs to numb their feelings of fear and pain.

Many battered women say their bruises heal, but the psychological pain lasts a long, long time. When women are repeatedly criticized, put down and insulted, they lose self esteem and confidence.

Many women describe feeling crazy because no matter what they do they are blamed for what happens to them.

After a woman leaves an abusive relationship, she may blame herself for getting involved in the first place. Many women fear that it will happen again. Women feel fear and anger towards their husbands, but many women also feel sorry for them.

Women do not like being beaten, nor do they passively accept abuse and assault. In fact, women are continually trying to make it stop. Because most women love their husbands but hate the abuse, they try to get their husbands to seek help for their drinking or anger problems, or go for marriage counselling. Usually their husbands refuse or go for a few sittings and then drop out.

For one battered woman, work may be a safe place where she feels worthwhile and competent and where she can socialize with co-workers. It may be the only place where she is safe and not feel afraid.

Another woman may be tense or anxious at work. She may receive harassing calls from her partner and live in fear of losing her job because of his behaviour or her absence. She may not tell anyone what is happening because she’s afraid they will judge her.

If a friend or co-worker tells you she is being battered, you may be surprised. She may never have told anyone because she was afraid no one would believe her. If her husband is well liked and respected, it may be difficult for her friends and family to believe that this charming man also batters his wife.

You may know about or suspect battering long before a woman says anything, but not know how to approach her. It’s important to take your cues from the woman herself. Telling her that you are concerned about her and would like to offer her support is often the best approach.

We can make our workplaces safe for women to talk about what is happening to them by offering friendship, support and information about community resources. And we can use our concern and anger to support and work with other groups to stop wife assault.

Taking Action: A Union Guide to Ending Violence Against Women is a joint publication of the Women’s Research Centre and the B.C. Federation of Labour, written by Debra Priester and Mary Rowles. Copies are available from the federation.

July/August 1992 • GUARDIAN
Coffee Break

Don’t read this item unless you are at home.
Believe it or not, this is the kind of advice that appeared on a Canadian aircraft products bulletin board and was reproduced in the newsletter of Lodge 721 of the International Association of Machinists: 

Bulletin Board Notices Are Not To Be Read During Working Hours!

The Human Cost of the Tories’ Job Loss Policies

As Canada’s 11 per cent unemployment rate rises, the Canadian Mental Health Association has watched the rates of infant mortality, suicide, homicide, spouse and child abuse, alcoholism, drug addiction, family breakdown and stress-related illness rise with it.

According to the CMHA’s Norman Maclean, “we tend to view these problems as self-inflicted, instead of working to reverse the burden of unemployment.”

Those Health Care Bosses Love the Big Bucks

According to Business Week magazine, the average chief executive of a large corporation was paid $104 times as much as a factory worker last year.

The biggest money-makers tend to be leaders of companies that have staked out strong claims in the health care business.”

French Break New Ground on Harassment

A new French government law will make sexual harassment in the workplace a crime punishable by up to two years in prison. Cabinet approved the bill in April.

He drives a 32-window coupe with big tires

Sitting in an intersection, a Vancouver bus driver noticed a fancy car that had squeezed between the bus and the curb. He opened the front door and yelled, “What is that?”

The car driver replied, “A 1992 Lamborghini, but what do you care? You couldn’t afford to drive one on your salary. What do you drive?”

To which the bus driver answered, “A 32-window coupe made by Flyer, 1990 edition!”

Even Banks Can’t Afford U.S. Costs

Well-heeled holders of premium credit cards will no longer receive automatic out-of-country medical insurance, any Canada’s banks. They just can’t afford it.

Banks like the Royal and the Bank of Montreal were counting on Canadian health care plans to pay a large share of the costs, but Ontario’s plan recently announced it will pay no more than $400 of the $5,000 average daily cost of a U.S. hospital stay.

“Key targets of the cutbacks are retired ‘snowbirds,’ who holiday every winter in the U.S. and hold the premium costs because of the health insurance feature.”

SOURCE: CALA

HEU protests exclusion from violence program

HEU has served notice to the Ministry of Health that its members must be included in any program dealing with patient violence.

HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Alfaveto issued a strong protest to health minister Elizabeth Call in mid-May when the union learned that the ministry had provided $257,000 to the B.C. Health Association, an employer group, to fund a “provider abuse program.”

The program is designed to educate workers in dealing with hostile patients, including identification of potential problems, development of emergency response teams and staff debriefing.

Incredibly, however, the steering committee for the program did not include representatives from HEU or the Health Sciences Association.

“Once again, HEU members are invisible,” Alfaveto said. “It is unacceptable that the ministry, hospitals and registered nurses are represented on the steering committee for this program and HEU is not.”

“HEU members form the largest group of health care workers who have contact with patients, yet we are not included.”

“Patient violence is a major issue for our members,” Alfaveto said. “HEU must be an active participant in any program to deal with patient violence.”

The program was established through the Provincial Nursing Advisory Committee. The provincial Social Credit government had rejected HEU participation on the committee.

In a June 13 reply, Call said the program is designed to focus on registered nurses. She also promised to review the composition of the Nursing Advisory Committee during the fall.

Public sector layoffs are second wave of recession

Economists and Tory politicians will be talking about a recovery. But they’re contradicted every time new economic numbers are released by Statistics Canada.

The recession may have begun as manufacturers’ laid off workers and closed plants. But the second wave is now hitting — the layoff of workers who are directly or indirectly employed by government.

As almost every province in the country restricts spending, public service layoffs are offsetting modest gains in manufacturing and retailing.

For instance, in April there was an increase of 34,000 manufacturing jobs across the country. But this was more than offset by the loss of 34,000 jobs in government, and 37,000 in community, business and personal services.

“The governments are not trimming the pump at all,” said Ottawa economist Carl Saven. “They’re cutting back on capital spending and they’re cutting back on their own employment.”

The result: the deficit-fixation of almost all governments in the country is creating a second wave of recession, just when the private sector seemed ready to bounce back.

Tories, Liberals save FTA

Progressive Conservative and Liberal members of Parliament joined forces to defeat the NDF motion to cancel the Free Trade Agreement in mid-May.

Under a three-year-old deal negotiated by the Tories, Canada can give the U.S. six-month’s notice and cancel the agreement. “Since the Canada-U.S. free trade deal came into effect, the destruction of manufacturing jobs has been dramatic and devastating,” argued NDP trade critic Dave Barrett, who introduced the motion to cancel the deal.

The Liberals said they voted against Barrett’s motion because they want to renegotiate the agreement rather than just walk away from it.
ATTENTIONBNXB
RDERNBLOODAO
MTMONILNEYLPY
YSPOIEEBDPANE
EEENFWAODYUL
RTRAAIAETBFLC
TRACDISHARSHOL
EATAESHTEEEL
LSUVEDHURTVMQ
EHHRWSESOAIIUM
AEROSTCSTEOSS
SULIONKAOOPT
PKNDSATSELLUR

THANKS TO VIVIAN
JENKINS OF HEU'S STAFF
RECEPTION IN QUESNEL FOR MENTIONING THIS MONTH'S PUZZLE.

All the letters are used at least once — and some more than once. Words run horizontally, vertically or diagonally, backward or forward, but all necessarily in a straight line.

Word List: Administrator Air Arm Ask Ascension Bath Bad Bads Badgen Blood Red Report Rose Room Rules Serve Shook Ski Sours Soup Stand Task Temperature Test Tool Tray Uniform Union Vacation Veal Wash West

CALENDAR

The Guardian welcomes in
terest to Calendar. Mail
to 2005 West 10th Ave.,
Vancouver, 634 495 or
J 734-2431, HEU
notices will get priority in
the space available.

AUGUST
10, 11
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, HEU Provincial Executive meeting, Vancouver.

SEPTEMBER
9-11
WEDNESDAY TO FRIDAY, HEU Provincial Executive meeting, Prince George.

OCTOBER
4-10
SUNDAY TO SATURDAY, HEU Biennial Convention, Richmond Inn, Richmond.

NOVEMBER
30-4
MONDAY TO FRIDAY, B.C. Federation of Labour annual convention, Trade and Convention Centre, Vancouver.

LAW CAREER: Lee Whyte has resigned as HEU's assistant secretary-business manager to pursue a career in law. She worked for the union for 20 years.

HELEN KENDALL RETIRES IN PRINCETON

Helen Kendall, a 20-year member of HEU who worked in her faculty's laundry, dietary and housekeeping departments, retired in February. A very active member of her local, Kendall served both as shop steward, vice-chairperson and secretary-treasurer.

SHE LOOKS FORWARD TO SOME REST, A LITTLE TRAVEL, SOME TIME IN THE GARDEN AND SOME SNOWMOBLING.

ANDERSON, KINDEL RETIRE IN PENTICTON

Two long-time members of HEU's Penticton local retired earlier this year and both look forward to some intensive relaxation.

Margaret Anderson worked at a housekeeping aide and served at the local's secretary-treasurer. She started work in 1977. Olga Kindel started at Penticon Regional Hospital in 1972. She worked in the laundry and retired July 1. She reports it's "just like vacation!"

ALBERT TETZ WAS KEY ORGANIZER IN OKANAGAN

Hospital Employees' Union pioneer, organizer and long time Provincial Executive member Albert Tetz died Dec. 30, 1991, after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Born in February 1914, Tetz worked at Vernon Jubilee Hospital from 1948 until his retirement in March 1976. He was active in the certification drive at Vernon Jubilee where hospital workers joined the union in 1951. Tetz also worked to organize other hospitals in the Okanagan Valley, particularly St. Martin's in Oliver.

He is survived by his wife, Olga, their children Larry and Judith, and grandchildren Joanna and David.

ALBERT TETZ
Long-term care contracts
HEU members working in long-term care facilities have ratified new collective agreements.

PAGE 3

Closing beds
HEU members in communities around the province are in the thick of community campaigns to save their hospitals from bed closures and layoffs.

PAGE 8

Building a movement
Canada's trade unions elected new leadership and changed their constitution to prepare the Canadian Labour Congress for the challenges to come.

PAGE 10

Confronting violence

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