

FIGHTING VERSA

WITH HEALTH employers contracting out management work like crazy, HEU's Cranbrook local is fighting back.

Since Versa Services was hired in December to run some departments, company managers are "thumbing their noses at the employment security agreement," says local secretary-treasurer Wendy Lawton, causing a rash of grievances.

To highlight their concerns, the local set up a 'wheel of chance' on the HEU bulletin board, so that workers could spin to find out what they faced that day – everything from termination to employee of the day.

But their fun was short-lived. Their boss went ballistic and had the wheel destroyed. They grieved the boss' action and sent him a bill for the materials. Local leaders say their campaign will continue.

SEE RELATED STORY PAGE 5

OH NO, SUSPENDED Cranbrook shop steward Richard Nuttall and the local's wheel of chance.



Guardian 50

VOL. 12 NO. 3 THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

MAY/JUNE 1994



HEU members are on the front lines of our changing health care system.

We're taking on new roles and

We're in the community

challenges as the union follows health services into communities across B.C.

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DEBRA ROONEY GRAPHIC



SUPPORTING NURSES

HEU is standing side-by-side with B.C.'s community nurses in their fight to win parity with other BCNU members.



CANADIAN LABOUR MEETS

HEU was there. PAGE 11

COMMENT

Finding the right answers

by Carmela Allevato



LATER THIS YEAR we will be holding HEU's 19th biennial convention, which will be like no other for our union. We are at the half century point of our existence. It's a good time to assess how far we've come and how far we have to go to achieve the goals and objectives set out in our constitution.

We will also have an opportunity to assess the impact of the government's Closer to Home health care reforms on our members and on B.C.

Our convention will come on the heels of the government's Oct. 1 deadline for creating regional health boards. These new boards will be the employer replacing existing hospital boards and health societies.

This new governance and employer structure will have tremendous consequences for us. We must take the necessary policy and structural steps so that we can respond to the challenges of regionalization.

The importance of regionalization for HEU is underscored by new legislation brought in recently by the government. Bill 48 interferes in the area of union jurisdiction, and prevents the Labour Relations

Board from deciding what the union bargaining unit will look like once existing employers are replaced by regional boards. The bill allows Victoria to determine consistency of wages and benefits across the industry and to establish a timetable to achieve it.

Let's take the example of the Revelstoke homemakers, for whom HEU negotiated Master Agreement wages and working conditions on the basis of a common hospital employer earlier this year.

Under Bill 48, the Premier and his cabinet can decide that the Revelstoke homemakers must be part of a bargaining unit separate from the hospital, and that HEU cannot negotiate Master Agreement conditions for them. This makes a mockery of free collective bargaining. It's unacceptable.

Along with structural issues, the internal allocation of HEU resources must also be debated at convention. How do we prepare ourselves for collective bargaining in 1996? How can we strengthen our stewards and broaden the base of activism in our union? How do we defend medicare? How do we assert our rightful place in the house of labour?

The Provincial Executive has struck a subcommittee to prepare a document for convention that will identify issues, suggest solutions and set out a process for membership-wide discussion similar to the 1990 strike review process that led to our successful bargaining and job action in 1992.

Finding the right answers to these questions has never been more important. I encourage all HEU members to discuss these issues in your workplace, to attend local meetings and give your input to your convention delegates so that HEU's 19th biennial convention will set the right course for our union.

'We must take the necessary policy and structural steps to respond to the challenges of regionalization'

letters

THE GUARDIAN WELCOMES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. PLEASE BE BRIEF. WRITE TO 2006 WEST 10TH AVE., VANCOUVER V6J 4P5.

CUPE, Alberta coverage criticized

In the April/May issue of *The Guardian*, you dedicated two pages to Alberta's political struggles and the possible merger of HEU with CUPE. There wasn't one line denouncing the loss of 33 full-time HEU positions at Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster.

I do agree we should be informed about other union struggles, couldn't one column have sufficed? Do you believe that Ralph Klein and his band of yahoos would ever have any influence on B.C. health care?

As for this so called merger with CUPE, what nonsense! Take a look at their accomplishments over the last few years; loss of job security, wage concessions, wage freezes, wage roll-backs, massive layoffs,

support for Quebec separation, and lack of pay equity.

As a delegate to the 1992 CLC convention in Vancouver, I attended the opening seminar on human rights and several CUPE caucuses. I was shocked by their lack of knowledge of B.C. trade unionism and our accomplishments. Also during the convention, our secretary-business manager's comments were reported as being complete nonsense by [the] then president of CUPE, when she suggested positions reserved for female candidates on the national executive be elected by the national women's caucus. Why? Because HEU would have one of the largest voting blocks on that committee!

Do we want a large Eastern based union dictating our business, not to mention our money? I sincerely hope not! I urge all locals to send resolu-

tions to our fall convention denouncing any further merger with CUPE! I also ask that elected delegates investigate the issues behind our split from them in 1970.

This will be one of the most important resolutions at our convention and could have a major impact on our future direction. Don't be scammed, do your homework and vote accordingly.

R. NOLETTE.

Royal Columbian local,
New Westminster

Music, goodwill build fair wage solidarity

• HEU received this letter shortly after an April 20 St. Paul's Hospital rally to protest violations of fair wage laws for construction at the Vancouver hospital. See story page 12.

On behalf of the B.C. Provincial Council of Carpenters, I would like to thank you and your membership for your generous support and participation at our demonstration on April 20 at St. Paul's.

As an organizer, I've worked with brothers and sisters to assemble all manner of demos and pickets, but I have to say that this was the most interesting gathering of unions and interests I've been privileged to have a hand in.

It's hard for trade unionists to gain a forum these days, and when we do, there are usually constraints and conditions. When we create our own forum we can do it with music and goodwill and the momentum that we created at St. Paul's.

GIL ARNOLD,

B.C. Provincial Council of Carpenters

Teachers' bargaining rights under attack

On March 10, minister of finance Elizabeth Cull announced a new system of teacher bargaining which would dissolve the Vancouver Teacher's Federation as the bargaining agent for Vancouver teachers. No decertification vote has been or is likely to be held in this bargaining unit.

While the minister of finance has said that the proposed system will allow for local bargaining of "quality of education" issues, such bargaining will not include cost items. As well, the proposed legislation will remove our right to strike at the local level.

Bargaining one provincial collective agreement will have an adverse effect on the school system. Our collective agreements must include provisions on such things as class size, mainstreaming and inner city schools. Adding a provincial system will only increase the administrative bureaucracy and reduce the ability of school districts and teachers to deal with student needs.

All union members recognize that it is a fundamental right of a worker to organize and choose an appropriate bargaining unit and agent. The government is taking this right away from teachers without their agreement.

We want to make our position perfectly clear and to ask members of other unions to support us.

CHRISTINA SCHUL,

President, Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association

Guardian

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

EDITOR

Geoff Meggs

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Chris Gainer,

Stephen Howard

DESKTOP PRODUCTION

Carol Bjarnason

DESIGN CONSULTATION

Kris Klaasen

PRODUCTION & PRINTING

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The Hospital Guardian is published by the Guardian Publishing Society on behalf of the Provincial Executive of the Hospital Employees' Union, under the direction of an Editorial Committee whose members are:

Fred Muzin

Carmela Allevato

Mary LaPlante

Ruby Hardwick

Tom Knowles

Maurice Smith

Colleen Fitzpatrick

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President

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Okanagan

Linda Hargreaves

Regional Vice-President

Vancouver Island

Pam Gidney

First Alternate

Provincial Executive

UNION OFFICES

Provincial Office

2006 West 10th Ave.

Vancouver V6J 4P5

734-3431

Okanagan Office

100, 160 Dougall Rd. S.

Kelowna V1X 3J4

765-8838

Kootenay Office

745 Baker St.

Nelson V1L 4J5

354-4466

Vancouver Island Office

415 Gorge Road East

Victoria V8T 2W1

480-0533

Northern Office

1197 Third Ave.

Prince George V2L 3E4

564-2102

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What we're up to

Local has community campaign mission

HEU's Mission local is seeking community support to block an employer's proposal to replace the hospital's five switchboard operators with an electronic voice mail system.

Switchboard operators play an undervalued role in the

health care system, says local chairperson Kate Marleau, providing hands on services in person and over the phone.

"They're the smile that people see when they first enter the hospital," she said. After a successful rally May



Their mission? To save switchboard operator jobs.

25, the Mission local has started a community campaign and petition drive to keep the switchboard operators on the job.

"The community won't have proper service when a real person isn't there to take the call," says Marleau.

The employer wants to make the cut to deal with a budget shortfall. But Marleau says the boss hasn't followed government orders to consult, nor has it checked out voluntary options with the local.

"We'll do what it takes to keep them working," Marleau says.

Turning the table on TQM

HEU's Simon Fraser Lodge local in Prince George is fighting new management strategies, like TQM at work.

Simon Fraser Lodge activists Maureen Kingdon, left, and Cyndie Stephens turned the tables on a recent TQM ploy by their boss. A Keg gift certificate awarded by the boss to Kingdon, was used as the prize in a fundraising raffle sponsored by the local.



So, when their boss tried to implement an employee recognition award program, they were ready with an ingenious response.

The recipient of the award turned over her prize, a \$50 Keg restaurant certificate, to the local.

Then the local used the certificate as the prize in a

raffle that raised more than \$160 that will be used for a special union project.

"We do not believe in TQM, and we will not have our members or the local executive bought off for doing our job," says local chairperson Cyndie Stephens.

continued on page 3

Contract deal ends Come Share strike

HEU members at the Come Share adult day care centres in White Rock and Surrey are back on the job with a new first contract after a six month strike for a fair settlement.

"We think it's really great for a first contract," said Irma Neufeld, secretary-treasurer of the 14 member local. "When we compare it to what we had before we went out on strike it's excellent."

The 43-month contract, retroactive to April 1993, will see wage rates increase to \$15.21 an hour Jan. 1, 1996, with a further wage reopener in April 1996. It also includes a full range of benefits, including a pension plan.

The deal was based on the binding recommendations of Labour Relations Board mediator Irene Holden, released May 10.

"Although the new contract comes short of the industry standard, our Come Share members have closed most of the distance between the substandard wages they used to earn and the standard," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

It was a long struggle, said Neufeld, but worth it. Come Share members kept it together through some long cold times on the picket line, she said, by never losing sight of their goal: to win justice.

"Without solidarity between members, we wouldn't have ever made it six months. More than anything, when you reach a crisis like that it's solidarity that helps you make it to the end."

Neufeld said her members, who returned to work May 24, are glad to be serving clients, and they'll work out problems with management over time.



SIGNING OFF The deal to bring job security to union members at for-profit long-term care facilities was the final task for the HEU bargaining committee that was elected in 1990. Committee members are, from left seated, financial secretary Mary LaPlante, president Fred Muzin, chairper-

son Cindy Russell, and secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato. Back row from left, assistant secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt, Steve Pawlik, Julia Amendt, Roy Gerrath, Cliff Metcalfe, Jackie Peters, Pam Gidney, Joyce Dawson and secretary Jennifer Duncan.

Long-term care workers okay employment security

HEU MEMBERS in non-profit long-term care have ratified new collective agreements that will extend the Employment Security Agreement to their sector.

The votes came after HEU and BCNU reached tentative agreements with former employers who once belonged to the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association (CCERA), and who are now members of the Health Employers Association of B.C.

The agreement for 3,500 HEU members, ratified by a 94 per cent margin in voting that ended May 27, provides for wage increases equivalent to those already established for the unions' master agreements.

It also ensures that workers' employ-

ment security, wages and benefits will be protected as the system is restructured.

A similar deal has been reached for 1,700 union members with private-for-profit employers, and has been recommended for acceptance by the Provincial Executive in ratification votes starting June 13 and finishing June 22.

Both non-profit and for-profit long-term care employers will complete their ratification votes June 23.

Negotiations to extend the Employment Security Agreements to HEU members working in independent long-term care facilities are getting under way.

"With these agreements, our members in long-term care will be protected as the health care system undergoes some major changes," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato. "These members will

also get to enjoy the benefits of a shorter work week, which has been very popular among HEU members working in acute care facilities."

The new agreements in long-term care are due to expire March 31, 1996, the same day as the master agreement.

The agreements provide for reduction in the work week to 36 hours from 37.5 hours. Workers will receive a general wage increase of 2.8 per cent on all hours worked between Oct. 1, 1993 and the implementation date of the 36-hour week.

Workers also receive employment security and cannot be laid off for the life of the agreements. Workers facing displacement will have access to early retirement provisions and other programs of the Health Labour Adjustment Agency.

WHAT WE'RE UP TO



HEU was on hand at an April 28 ceremony to commemorate Canadian workers killed or injured on the job. Jim Dorsey, left, of the Workers' Compensation Board was among a number of speakers, including labour minister Dan Miller, pressing for safer workplaces.

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Workload the subject at Royal Jubilee study session

HEU Royal Jubilee members took quick action May 9 to block their boss' scheme to cut

staff without cutting work.

About 100 members were involved in a morning-long study session to oppose a plan to cut dietary staff by having nursing staff deliver and pickup meals at the Victoria facility's Memorial Pavilion

long-term care centre. They were also pressing other workload related problems that have produced an incredible backlog of work, especially in dietary and housekeeping.

The action, which was covered by the media, ended after the employer agreed to a review of workload issues, and that the members involved in the study session wouldn't be disciplined.

Take a second look, Ramsey asked

HEU Cumberland local members are calling on health minister Paul Ramsey to take a second look at proposals to close their Vancouver Island facility's surgical day care.

Earlier this year, the Upper Vancouver Island External Review of Health Services Task Force Review advised Ramsey to close the surgery and move

the services to Courtenay and Campbell River.

In calling on the health minister to put the recommendations on hold pending further study, the local points to inconsistencies in the review.

In a recent letter to Ramsey, local secretary-treasurer Marianne Davies said that even with employment security for health care workers the service cuts would have a huge social and economic impact on the community.

Davies reminded Ramsey that her community rallied in the 1970's to keep a facility in Cumberland when the general hospital was shut down, and was prepared to do so again.

Copies of new master agreement out soon

Copies of the new master agreement with health employ-

ers that incorporates the employment security pact will be made available to local members in mid-July.

A small number of advance copies were printed, and these have been sent out to local leaders.

Guardian the best, wins two national labour media awards

The *Guardian* was recognized as the best overall newspaper of any provincial-based union in Canada at a recent awards ceremony of the Canadian Association of Labour Media in Toronto.

The *Guardian*, which competes against newspapers from unions like the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union, and the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union, also won the best news coverage award.

So much to be done

Family support vital for first-time Cranbrook councillor Walsh

by Stephen Howard

AGOLF COURSE has got under Erda Walsh's skin. It's the poshest course in her home town of Cranbrook, where few working people can afford to play.

Yet Walsh's colleagues on Cranbrook city council have seen fit to bestow a big property tax break for the course owners, setting the assessed value of the land at a fraction of the \$1.5 million it would fetch on the market. She was alone in opposition.

The golf course issue cuts to the heart of why Walsh, a secretary in the Cranbrook Regional Hospital and a local HEU activist, ran for city council last November. "I look at the city and I see so much that has to be done for working people", she says.

Walsh has long been active in her community, at the hospital, within the NDP, at the local college where she taught first aid courses, as a part-time ambulance paramedic for the B.C. Ambulance Service, and as a regional vice-president for the paramedics union, CUPE local 873.

So with last year's election looming, Walsh was lobbied to run for council. It was easy for her to say yes. "I like to talk, I like to meet people, I like to lobby, and I like to get things done."

After a tough campaign with 11 people in the hunt—including four incumbents—she won a council seat, finishing fourth with about 1,700 votes.

Walsh, who puts more time into council than her paid jobs, has some firm views on the responsibilities of politicians. "I really feel strongly about accountability. If you can't be accountable, you shouldn't be in the job."

She's quite open about her political ambitions. She wants to be mayor of Cranbrook some day soon.

CUPE has played a part in her political development as well. When she was first

elected to the local 873 executive, she was the only woman on a 16-member executive. But the men gave her strong support, sending her to numerous CUPE education courses. "It got the ball rolling," Walsh says.

Having grown children also cleared the way. She admits that if she still had kids at home, there's no way she could

BALANCING



IT ALL



be as active politically. Family life, which now includes one grandchild, is a vital part of Walsh's support system.

"If anyone's going to run [for office] you need the support of your family and your spouse. I've seen it in other relationships where women just don't get that support. Anytime something takes you away from

your family, from your home, it causes problems. My husband Gerry understands my goals and where I want to go. But it's hard for him some times.

"I know what I'm like when I'm on the edge," she says. "Every so often I have to bring myself back down to reality," and her family is there to help sort things out.

More cash for early retirement

The Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency has set up a new \$12 million Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) program, which will allow about 400 more health care workers to retire early.

Regular employees aged 55 to 65

working in facilities covered under the Employment Security Agreement are eligible, and all workers who applied for previous early retirement programs must reapply.

Successful ERI applicants will get an incentive payment equal to six months pay, unless they are less than six months away from their 65th birthday. They will also receive a full superannuation pension without normal

early retirement penalties.

ERI will run in two rounds. The application date for round one is August 31, while the deadline for round two is January 31, 1995. Applications rejected in round one will be considered in round two.

Further information is being sent to locals, and is available from HEU and the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency.

Last year, nearly 300 health care workers, including 191 from HEU, took early retirement under a \$10 million government program.

The ERI program is part of a \$15 million B.C. government commitment for 1994 for early retirement initiatives offered through the agency. The other \$3 million has been allocated to permit more early retirements under the programs set up last year.

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

Pentiction hospital conditions deplorable

Leaders of HEU's Pentiction Regional Hospital local have long been concerned about a shortage of beds that requires some patients to be held in temporary beds in hallways and in the hospital's emergency room.

Now, a 63-year old retired area resident has condemned the practise in a letter published in the local paper after his wife was forced to endure such a stay recently.

"Yesterday, last night and today, [my wife] and seven other patients have lain on cots in the emergency department waiting room. This room has a public washroom, a TV, a pay phone, and bright florescent lighting," he wrote.

"The eight, waiting sick people are not getting any

rest during the day, nor can they sleep properly at night in these ridiculous circumstances. The washroom door bangs regularly, the TV is on, the public chat, laugh and discuss in loud voices. My wife has no bell to summon help. Is this the best we can do for people?"

HEU demands slowdown in social policy review

When federal employment minister Lloyd Axworthy insisted last month that he will push ahead with massive changes to the national social safety net, HEU joined other unions in protesting directly to prime minister Jean Chretien.

Hearings of a parliamentary committee whistled through discussions on unemployment insurance,

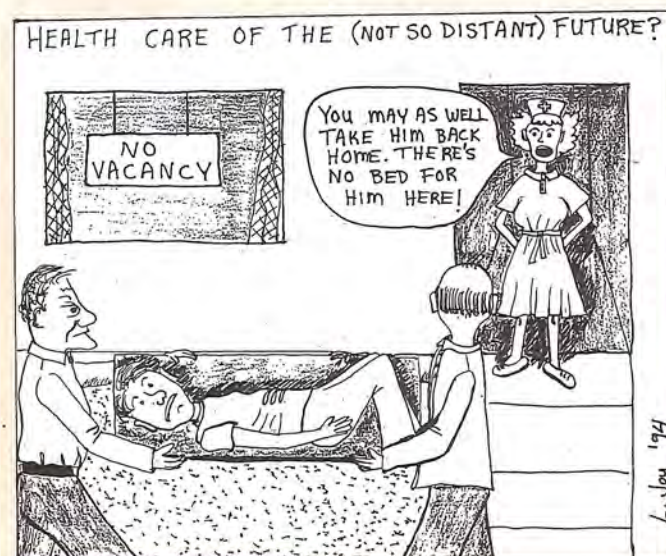
pensions, child tax benefits and a host of other issues in a few short days.

In a letter to Chretien, HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato demanded that the government "reverse this disastrous course."

Long-distance solidarity feeling perks up Mt. Tolmie member

Mt. Tolmie local activist Terry Perks was feeling down because of major restructuring at the Juan de Fuca Hospital system in the Greater Victoria area.

So, when Williams Lake local member Ollie Martens phoned her March 19, to ask if she could stay with her when Martens came to town to join the massive rally against the CORE Report and for employment security for woodworkers, Perks got a boost.



Martens arrived March 21 "in the midst of yellow ribbons and monstrous trucks," Perks writes. "Victoria seemed filled with a wonderful feeling of solidarity."

Perks also took part in the rally.

"I feel proud to be HEU, proud to be union and glad I could be there for this part of history."

Halt contracting out work, health ministry urged

HEU is pressing health minister Paul Ramsey to get tough with employers and put a stop to contracting out of management services at B.C. health facilities.

"This kind of contracting out of the bosses' work has reached epidemic proportions," said union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

"It's a sophisticated way of contracting out bargaining unit work under the cover of budget cuts. It's a violation of the intent of the Employment Security Agreement, and it must be stopped."

The union call for the moratorium, made in a June 20 letter to Ramsey, was triggered by an incident at Kootenay Lake Hospital, where management of the Nelson facility's dietary department was handed over May 31 to the Toronto food giant Versa Services.

In doing so, the hospital ignored a comprehensive plan prepared by dietary workers that would have improved service, preserved jobs, saved money and moved aggressively to provide services in the community care sector.

By comparison, Versa plans to cut costs by slashing service and trying to reclassify workers to lower pay rates. Actual management costs under the new setup — the cost of an on site Versa boss, plus Versa's \$28,000 annual "fee" — may in fact be more than the hospital is currently spending, says Alison Hutchison, a food service worker, and local HEU activist.

Hutchison fears the move will inflame hospital relations with its workers and with the community. Even local businesses stand to lose out in the move because Versa's centralized purchasing network will bypass the local suppliers who do a significant part of their business with the hospital.

The decision is a sign that their employer doesn't want to live up to the spirit of cooperation and creativity that's required by the ESA, she says.

Her local's written proposal — prepared by five workers with more than 170 years of dietary experience, was based on financial realities and a desire to promote "local talent and preserving and enhancing labour and community relations. Going outside to a private company [Versa] will go a long way to damage those relations."

"I just don't see a cost saving in going with Versa," Hutchison said.

While the local has filed a grievance on the contracting out under the ESA, HEU is also battling contracting out and privatization at the tri-union level.



REFORM, AMERICA More than 20,000 U.S. health workers rallied June 8 in Washington to push politicians to implement a national health care

plan that meets the needs of American workers. HEU leaders Fred Muzin, Carmela Allevato, and Mary LaPlante were on hand.

U.S. health workers press for real health reform in mass rally

THOUSANDS of U.S. health care workers rallied June 8 in Washington demanding real health care reform in a country where profit based health care has left millions of Americans without adequate care.

The workers, and the unions behind the event, were pushing for a single-payer system, like Canada's medicare system, a popular option that's being ignored by the U.S. health care establishment and president Bill Clinton.

And HEU was there to lend it's support, with the union's top officers Fred Muzin, Carmela Allevato, and Mary LaPlante bringing greetings from health workers in B.C.

The massive rally was historic for two reasons: it marked the first stage of an all-out offensive by American unions to win a decent health care plan that meets the needs of American workers.

And it also marked the first time since the completion of the North American Free Trade Agreement that representatives of Canadian and American health care workers had the opportunity to sit down together to plan joint action.

"If U.S. workers don't win a system like ours, then our Medicare program is in serious danger," said Allevato. "We really need to tell our American sisters and brothers about how good Medicare can be, because if they win, we win."

Leading the fight to unite American and Canadian unions is Local 1199, a 140,000-strong independent union of hospital workers in the New York area.

Managed competition, the corporate health care model proposed by president Clinton, will lead to ferocious competition among hospitals, warns 1199 president Dennis Rivera, with some hospitals going bankrupt and others merging.

Rivera has managed to bring all American unionized health care workers into a single movement for decent medicare. Despite the low level of unionization in the United States, that's more than one million workers.

Joining them for the strategy session and rally were Canadian representatives of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the National Union of Provincial Government Employees and the National Federation of Nurses' Unions, and representatives of the Health Services Union of Australia.

PRESIDENT'S DESK



Controlling the agenda

by Fred Muzin

MUCH OF THE learning at an HEU summer school occurs outside the classroom. That's part of the advantage in having 200 activists off the job, living at UBC, away from the demands of the local and family.

The Chilliwack local should be commended for their efforts to educate others about the latest management craze – Patient Focused Care (PFC).

In 1993, the Fraser Valley was targeted by employers to try out this new concept. It's based on multi-skilling in which the patient deals with fewer health care workers who are each trained to perform a bit of several jobs – housekeeping, laundry, nursing, dietary.

While this may appear less disruptive for the "client," the exercise ultimately is to eliminate staff, at the cost of quality, expert care.

PFC is part of the TQM agenda being pushed by American health care consultants, who are making huge profits from teaching these schemes.

The theory is that health care will be more cost effective if 'non-productive' time is eliminated. For instance, portering patients to physiotherapy or X-ray is seen as wasteful. Talking to patients to comfort them or to explain the strange medical environment is unnecessary. Time is money!

In PFC, satellite pharmacies are set up on the wards; physiotherapists circulate between areas, quick freeze meals are reheated in microwaves. There is a major investment in capital equipment in order to save on salary costs – at a time when unemployment is over 10 per cent.

These are the same concepts that led to the increase in out-patient clinics and day care surgery, and allowed facilities to close beds.

There's little regard for readmission rates or the effects on families, especially women, who have to stay home to care for loved ones that survive the quicker and sicker medical system.

How do we fight back? There are no quick-fix answers. Local members, activists, staff and the Provincial Executive must work together to design an effective strategy. There are good and bad aspects to many of these new management techniques – if we control the agenda as was done in Australia, there can be real benefits for our members.

We need information from locals on how patients and staff are affected. Is quality being compromised? Are workloads increased? Is work more interesting? Are wages increased because of integrated jobs? Are some jobs being deskilled?

All health unions must be involved in this dialogue. We must ensure that the enhanced consultation provided for in the Employment Security Agreement occurs.

Governments have to be lobbied because proper health care reform will remain a job half-baked as long as right wing bureaucrats are running rampant, making decisions without regard for the public or health workers.

We have to educate other unions and the community and seek their support. We can overcome this and any other challenge as long as we remain united and focused – health care quality focused!



MARATHON FINISH Evergreen local's Kathy Dinning crosses the line at the Boston Marathon. Her time was 3:36:46 – an eight-minute mile pace – for the 26 mile race.

Dinning runs Boston classic

Kathy Dinning is the first HEU member to run the famous Boston Marathon.

Along with 8,105 entrants massed at the start line at the April 18 event, Dinning was there to test her strength and endurance in the world's most famous marathon.

A care aide and chairperson of HEU's Evergreen local in White Rock, Dinning finished with a time of 3:36:46 for the 26 mile, 285 yard (42 kilometre) event – a little off her personal best, but still quite respectable. Of the 1,744 women who started the race, Dinning finished 568th.

"My goal was to run to finish the event and to feel it – this is a famous event and I wanted to be part of it," Dinning said.

Unlike most marathons, Boston's is a spectator event, and thousands lined the full course. "There was no place where you were alone without spectators there to cheer you on," said Dinning.

"I was excited – I felt fast, and the crowds really moved me. So I felt strong." At times throughout the race she had to slow herself down, she says, because her adrenalin was pushing her too fast.

According to marathon lore, the last six is the make it or break it stage. At this point in the Boston race, runners face the challenge of a three mile uphill climb,

called Heartbreak Hill.

"It's where a lot of people hit the wall. At this stage your legs are tired and the climb seems endless."

After she'd tamed the hill she says the last three miles were difficult.

"Your muscles are aching and your body is telling you to quit. That's when you stop hearing the crowds cheering for you, and you start concentrating on the patterns in the pavement. I watch my feet – I almost hypnotize myself."

Once across the finish line,

Dinning received a medal and official record number. After some food and refreshment she walked for a long time to keep the kinks out of her body and prevent her muscles from seizing up. Then she was ready to party.

Dinning started running in 1985 for the exercise and to relieve stress, which was handy when she became an HEU local leader in 1987. Since 1989, though, she's become more serious and has run at least one marathon a year, and cut her time from about four hours to 3:30.

"Running marathons gives me strength and the knowledge that I can do anything I want if I put my mind to it. I feel good when I run."

AFTER



THE SHIFT

My life, our lives

by Vivien Smith

I get up in the morning and have my coffee, just as you do. I want to own my own home, just like you. I aspire to the same dreams as you. There is a vast difference between you and me, even though we both go to work and care for people. I am a lesbian.

My life, in terms of safety and equality, is not the same as yours. My world is not a safe world to walk in. There could always be somebody, just around the corner, with anger in their eyes, ready to have some of their idea of fun and do a little gay bashing. They think it is okay, but to me they are raping, maiming and killing me, my friends, our brothers and sisters.

Does the world come to my defense, our defense? Well, I don't think so. Everyone talks about equality, but does it exist? You be the judge.

I enter a club, a gay club is chosen. How separate! However, other clubs are not safe – there are too many people in them ready to hurt you if they find out you are lesbian or gay. They may just laugh and make jokes at your expense, but there are many that go further. Every lesbian I know, knows someone who has been raped, beaten or murdered by these people. This is my life, our lives.

Last Sunday I was packing to go to my shop stewards course and was thinking what a privilege it is to belong to a union so progressive that it supports equality and lesbian and gay rights.



'I am a lesbian who wants to fight for equality for all'

Monday rolls around, and here I am, in a crowd of fellow union activists, listening to a speaker talk about union policies. The speaker discussed harassment policies like our right to be in harassment-free environments. These policies are to be abided by while on all union business, like this course. The people in this room are like me, stewards or union executives who might end up representing someone who has been harassed.

I felt good, I felt safe, like maybe I belonged. I am a lesbian who wants to fight for equality for all. I felt supported.

It's Wednesday, our last night. Everybody is invited to go to the bar downstairs where we are staying. I go, but I don't feel comfortable or safe even though it was full of my fellow union activists who are supposed to support equality and harassment-free environments. The following morning I am having coffee in the restaurant and in walks one of my fellow activists. He is angry, so I ask him what happened. "We were just having some fun, doing a little gay bashing, and if some people didn't like it, they could have left." A flurry of emotion passed through me – fear, panic, anger and an overall sense of feeling unsafe. He didn't see anything wrong with "a little gay bashing" his fellow union activist.

My dreams are of a day when we have a chance to heal our wounds. Unfortunately, this day will only come when equality exists for all, when I can leave my home and feel safe.

I am not different, the world makes me different.

• Smith is a Glengarry local activist.

Labour

NOTEWORTHY NEWS ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE HERE AND ABROAD

CLC seeks to rebuild NDP, labour vows

THE CANADIAN Labour Congress has decided to confront the collapse of voter support for the federal NDP with a two-year national review of the relationship between the party and labour.

The crisis over the NDP, which came to a head with the drastic rollbacks imposed on Ontario public sector workers by Bob Rae's government, threatened to split the Congress' May convention.

A compromise resolution, which was supposed to unite convention delegates, provoked such an emotional and sometimes bitter exchange that CLC president Bob White waded into the debate with a speech that brought the entire convention to its feet with a standing ovation.

"I want to get on with building something," White said. "We're talking about jobs, social programs, work time, the mean society. But we have to talk about political action."

"We can't fulfil our hopes, our dreams, our aspirations if we don't take our fight on the streets into the legislatures of this society."

Rebuilding an enduring relationship with the NDP that wins worker support will be a tough task, White admits.

Ultimately, he declared, labour's goal is not to tailor its needs to the NDP but to ensure the NDP is committed to labour's program.

The resolution establishes a two-year review designed to "strengthen the future relationship between the CLC and its political ally."

But the committee conducting the review must also review the party's accountability to labour, especially when in government, and "why more union members have not supported the NDP in the past."

"It's time we dealt with issues of accountability," said CUPE president Judy Darcy. "We have to discuss what happens when the NDP is our employer. Our job, first and foremost, is to stand up for the interests of our members."

"If we're honest with ourselves, we know that 90 to 95 per cent of our members do not support the NDP."

Canadian Auto Workers president Buzz Hargrove said a review is overdue, given the Rae government's attacks on public sector bargaining.

"When we allow an NDP government to legislate these rights out of existence, we do the labour movement a major disservice."

But senior leaders of other affiliates were not prepared to criticize the Rae government's performance.

"There are only three things I need to know about politics," said Tom Kukovica

of the United Food and Commercial Workers. "One is that the corporate agenda is not our agenda. Two, we must support a political party willing to fight for working people. Three, there is only one party willing and able to fight that corporate agenda and that is the NDP."

Delegates from outside Ontario said workers in other provinces, such as Tory-ruled Alberta and Manitoba, "would kill for the type of labour legislation" introduced by the Rae government in Ontario.

That theme was elaborated by Angela Schira, secretary-treasurer of the B.C. Federation of Labour, who listed a long series of B.C. NDP initiatives. To complete the work "we plan on having a second term," she said.

UI ACTION Hundreds of Canadian Labour Congress delegates protest cuts to unemployment insurance at a Toronto rally.



Symphony a real TQM farce

A company president had been given tickets for the performance by the local symphony orchestra of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony.

The boss couldn't attend the event, so he passed on the tickets to his company's Total Quality Management consultant.

The next morning over coffee, the president asked the consultant whether he had enjoyed the concert, and was handed a memorandum which read:

For considerable periods, the four oboe players had nothing to do. Their number should be reduced and their work spread over the whole orchestra, thus eliminating peaks of activity.

All of the 12 violins were playing identical notes. This seemed to be unnecessary duplication, and the staff of this section should be cut drastically.

No useful purpose is served by repeating with horns the passages that have already been played by the strings. If all such redundant passages were eliminated, the concert could be reduced from two hours to 20 minutes.

If Schubert had attended to these matters, he probably would have been able to finish his symphony after all.

• CALM

South Africa is a 'whole new ballgame' after Mandela election

Unions press for democratic reform of public services

by Stephen Howard

Life for South Africans after the country's first democratic election and the rise to power of Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress is "a whole new ballgame," according to Vusi Nhlapo, leader of the 70,000 member National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union.

Nhlapo, who met with members of HEU's Provincial Executive at a 1993 CUPE conference in Montreal, says public sector workers will be pressing for major changes in how public services are delivered, as the apartheid structure is dismantled.

"From our side, we'll be putting in demands that will enhance the reconstruction and development program that the ANC ran on," said Nhlapo, who spoke with *The Guardian* from Johannesburg June 17.



NHLAPO

The NEHAWU president said there must be a special forum involving all public sector groups to begin democratizing public services and act on key issue like employment equity.

The ANC program calls for building 1,000,000 new homes to ease the country's severe housing shortage, providing water and electricity for hundreds of rural communities, and big reforms in the apartheid-based health, education and job training systems that were geared to serving the small white minority.

The ANC will totally revamp health care, Nhlapo says. The old system, he said, was almost solely focussed on urban acute care facilities, offering "first-world" surgeries like heart bypasses, and unnecessary services like plastic surgery for whites, while blacks went without basic care.

"We must change that pyramid of service and turn it around," he says. The reforms will focus on creating primary

health centres in urban and rural areas, which will be the first point of access and will refer to clinics or urban acute facilities. Nursing staff, who make between \$600 (LPNs) and \$800 (RNs) a month will be carrying the load in delivering primary, preventative care.

But Nhlapo says better wages and working conditions for health workers must be part of the reform process, and

'We must change that pyramid of service and turn it around'

the election of the ANC should help at the bargaining table.

Nhlapo says black South Africans will be expecting change over the next five years, but there won't be the urgent groundswell of pressure on the ANC for immediate action that the Western media predicts.

"If you fight as long as the people of South Africa have been fighting, the population has learned one lesson," he said. "You cannot restructure a country within six months or a year. Changes must come as soon as possible, but no one expects them to happen in a year, or even two years time."

HEU members take on new roles and challenges as the union follows health services into the community

We're in the community

Multi-skilled group home workers want respect

by Geoff Meggs

FOR HEU member Marilyn Rust, going to work means trading the family joys, stresses and struggles of a single mother for the equally challenging task of building a family with four mentally-challenged adults.

She travels before dawn to a group home in a quiet Victoria suburb where the four members of her workday family must be bathed, dressed, fed and delivered to day programs before 8:30 a.m.

"This morning I arrived at work at 6:30 and my partner had prepared breakfast already," she said one day early in May. "One client was quite ill so I had to feed her a special diet. After breakfast, two needed assistance with bathing and we had to pick out their clothes. I have to clean up, start the laundry, clean the kitchen and give out the medications. Then we do the hair and makeup, get into the van, and out the door by 8:30 a.m."

Once the clients have been dropped off at their day programs, Rust returns to the home for another round of cleaning and household chores. Her workday will end by 10:30 a.m. when the house manager has arrived. Two workers will be on hand for the afternoon and early evening and another worker will do the graveyard shift, providing continuous support and assistance to the four clients.

The work goes far beyond housekeeping. Group home workers help their clients through programs designed to give them life skills to ensure maximum independence and freedom.

A working day can include the deep satisfaction of seeing a client complete a task for the first time and the terrifying shock of assault (at the hands of a panicked or angry adult who you have just bathed or fed).

Rust and more than 200 caregivers in group homes from the Kootenays to Vancouver Island have joined HEU in the past year as the union seeks to extend decent wages and working conditions to workers in the exploding community health care system.

For Rust, who researched several unions before approaching HEU for help, union representation means a voice in the workplace, protection for those who seek improved health and safety, more equality with powerful house supervisors and an end to isolation.

While employers want group home workers to pro-

vide the maximum possible emotional and physical support to their clients, they often fail to provide working conditions necessary for quality care.

"The basic reason we unionized, the number one word, was respect," says Rust. "Staff is constantly moved from home to home, working double, triple and quadruple shifts without overtime. We have no breaks."

"We had our last raise more than a year ago and it was only 21 cents an hour. People working in the institutions are making \$4 to \$5 an hour more. We feel we deserve equality. We want to get recognized, get respect for what we are doing."

That struggle for respect is the main reason, Rust believes, that the 60 HEU members working at several homes operated by Western Human Resources Limited have voted between 90 and 100 per cent in favour of strike action to win a first contract with their employer. They have been certified since February 1993.

In a sector of health care where workers can be fired for lacking "the right attitude," union organizing takes particular courage.

The group home workers represent both an opportunity and a challenge for HEU, which has historically represented workers in the hospitals and long-term care facilities which have dominated health care delivery until now.

Working with clients who formerly lived in institutions like Glendale and Tranquille, the group home workers know that "closer to home" community health services — if properly funded and operated — can provide care superior even to the best-run institution.

And because they work with minimal supervision, group home workers have to be versatile, willing to take responsibility and prepared to act. The strict jurisdictional lines typical of a hospital have no place here, where being "multi-skilled" is a point of worker pride.

Despite her concerns about working conditions, Rust believes that the dedication of group home workers means "people in my home get excellent care. After seeing them in the institutions, I am 110 per cent for where they are now."

Like other HEU group home workers, Rust has seen clients, who emerged from Glendale's severely withdrawn and unhappy, begin to blossom and grow in their new homes.

Group home workers become friends, sisters and brothers to their clients and believe strongly that unionization should help them gain a stronger voice as caregivers and advocates for their clients. "We need to

be listened to when we speak," Rust says, "and we need the government to recognize when we speak out about services. Residents must be listened to and taken more seriously than they are now. Some could live on their own and have been asking to but their concerns have been swept under the carpet."

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But the close relationship between client and caregiver has its price. "This becomes a second family," says one group home veteran. "We go through growth, laughter

and some very hard times." Clients seldom respect working hours if they need help that caregivers provide. These extra hours are usually unpaid.

Despite the personal rewards, the low wages and intense emotional pressures of group home work produce staff turnover that undermines quality care.

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"We all enjoy our jobs," says Gagnon from behind the wheel of the handi-dart van she's been driving since 1972 when she worked for a private ambulance service. The handi-dart service provides door-to-door transportation for hundreds of Quesnel residents who can't utilize the normal bus system.

The transit workers joined HEU to win better wages and conditions and "to protect jobs and services for the community."

In their community — and throughout the Cariboo — alcohol is by far the drug of choice. Then comes pot, coke, prescription drugs, and surprise, heroin.

Dee Hawse is a third-generation alcoholic. Her fellow counsellor John Simpson has his own history of abuse that started with an alcoholic father.

"It's almost a rule that drug and alcohol counsellors are recovering addicts," says Hawse, a Cree woman from Alberta, who after 25 years of drug abuse ended up in Quesnel in 1990 "on the run." Hawse's colleagues say having direct experience is key in terms of helping people.

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Sharon Jenkins, Dee Hawse, John Simpson, Vicky Lejins and Linette Parry work for the Quesnel Drug and Alcohol Abuse Association. They deal with people with big drug and alcohol problems, like people who are at the end of their rope — suicide — or the woman who's just been convicted of her fourth impaired charge and wants to start

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NEW DIRECTIONS
FACES Union members providing services for the community. Photo far left, Carol Legere. At left, Mary Gagnon, Fern Andres and Becky Webber. Below, John Simpson, Dee Hawse, Sharon Jenkins, and Vicky Lejins.



key to maintaining a viable health care facility in small communities. Surprisingly, she agrees with HEU that acute care facilities have to become "hospitals without walls."

Now they're looking at starting up the same kind of program for seniors later in the fall.

The lunch program gets two thumbs up from the elementary students. In a letter to the dietary staff, a Sparwood elementary school principal congratulated the workers for excellent service.

"You have been very accommodating to our school's needs," he wrote, "and this kind of professionalism is greatly appreciated."

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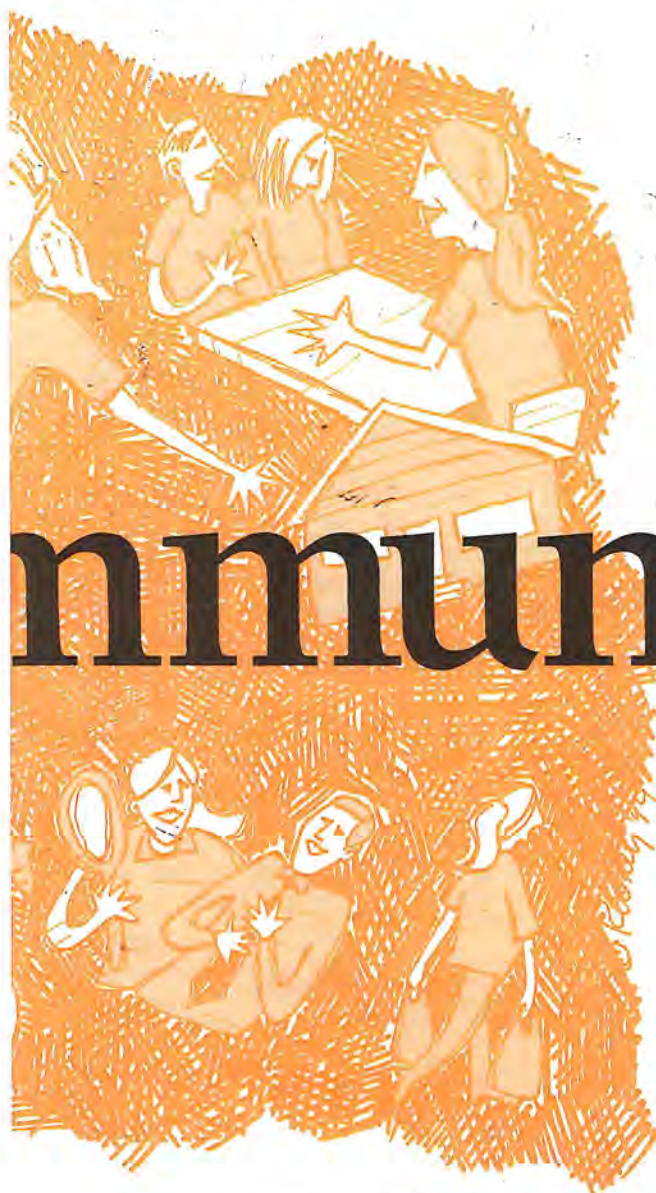
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Thanks to the Employment Security Agreement, Sparwood Hospital workers Mary Quarin, Fern Andres and Becky Webber have made a transition from being cleaners to food service workers who prepare the wildly successful lunch program for more than 300 public school students in the East Kootenay community.

The program, which was developed and proposed by dietary supervisor Shelley Wederburn, an HEU activist, was implemented with support from Victoria late last year to deal with the economic and social fallout following the closure of a nearby mine.

"It's allowed us to branch out and meet a real need for the community," says hospital administrator Lyn Noble.

The community program also helped ease fears about the possible closure of the hospital, which had been through a few tough financial years, and stabilized the job situation, says Noble.

Noble sees this kind of community initiative as the



NEW DIRECTIONS
FACES Union members providing services for the community. Photo far left, Carol Legere. At left, Mary Quarin, Fern Andres and Becky Webber. Below, John Simpson, Dee Hawse, Sharon Jenkins, and Vicky Lejins.



key to maintaining a viable health care facility in small communities. Surprisingly, she agrees with HEU that acute care facilities have to become "hospitals without walls."

Now they're looking at starting up the same kind of program for seniors later in the fall.

The lunch program gets two thumbs up from the elementary students. In a letter to the dietary staff, a Sparwood elementary school principal congratulated the workers for excellent service.

"You have been very accommodating to our school's needs," he wrote, "and this kind of professionalism is greatly appreciated."

Real health reform would target doctors

If governments were serious about health care reform, they'd "get tough on doctors," Saskatchewan labour leader Barb Byers told a June 7 HEU summer school forum.

Canadians are now paying for a tragic mistake made when our medicare system was set up, Byers says. "All doctors should have been put on salary instead of letting them run amok with fee for service," she said.

"We have to take on the power relations of doctors in the system," said Byers, the president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour.

The view from half way around the world is much the same, says Australian health union leader Jan Armstrong. In the right-wing driven health reform model being implemented in her home state of Victoria, doctors are the only group not under the gun.

Armstrong, the secretary of the Health Services Union of Australia, outlined similar concerns to those voiced by HEU. Their new system, the "quicker and sicker syndrome," is based on a U.S. funding model that "forces hospitals to compete for customers and compete on price," she said. It discriminates against the patients who "aren't cost effective to treat."

Armstrong says the health reform road taken in B.C. is more humane than what's happening at home, where reform has been a part of a right-wing government attack on the public sector, social



BYERS



ARMSTRONG

services and the labour movement.

More than 40,000 public sector jobs were cut in one year, she said, including 5,000 in health, and 7,000 teachers. Care

standards have plummeted, she said, noting that in one hospital showers and toilets are cleaned only once a week because of the job cuts.

Breaking the backs of unions was a key part of the government's health reform plan. Basic principles like dues checkoff ended overnight.

Armstrong went to bed one night in January 1993, with a membership of 27,500 members. "I woke up the next

morning with 3,000." Her union had to reorganize 18,000 members and arrange for new forms of dues collection.

Then, with unions weakened, existing master contracts were scrapped, while the government announced its intention to put every health care worker on an individual contract with their employer. There was also a concerted plan to contract out services and encourage the growth of private for profit facilities.

Byers says what's happening in health care is just one part of the corporate agenda for "social reform," and unions must build community-based coalitions to press for real change.

Armstrong said the attack is the same around the world, and she encouraged health unions to work more closely together to guard against the creeping threat of profit-based care. "United we bargain, divided we beg," she said.



HELPING HAND
Joan Smallwood, an NDP cabinet minister, was praised for helping an HEU member uncover part of her past at a June 1 forum.

In a wide-ranging speech that touched on several recent NDP social policy initiatives Smallwood urged trade unions to work with the government.

"We need to work together, we need to understand each other and we need to take advantage of the opportunities that are presented," she told the audience.

That's especially important since B.C. returned "too damn many" Reform candidates to Ottawa in the last federal election, Smallwood said. "Our values are under attack in this country and under attack in this province."

Reform-Party MPs want to eliminate the deficit in three years, which would mean cutting all government social spending, Smallwood noted. She attacked that stance, saying countries that spend the most on social services have the healthiest economies.

By contrast, our neighbour to the south has "a military economy not based on a healthy model that ensures equity and prosperity for all."

Meanwhile, in the discussion that followed HEU member Minnie Dennis praised Smallwood for helping Dennis find information about the childhood she spent as a ward of the state.

Smallwood made sure that a letter from Dennis, who was raised in foster homes, was passed on to appropriate social workers who then delved into government archives from the 1950s.

"What I learned was a real hair-raising experience," said Dennis, fighting back tears.

Studying the big picture

Outside, the sun shone and the birds sang. Inside, the professor was talking about the national debt and deficit. Pretty boring stuff. Except that he had the class's rapt attention.

In fact, participants at the HEU's seventh annual school, May 29 to June 7 at UBC, contributed their share of the answers in the give-and-take economics session led by Toronto law professor Neil Brooks.

In another classroom, historian and filmmaker Sara Diamond was reading an account of hospital work early in the century to her class. Her talk was followed by a lively discussion on inter-ethnic relations among hospital workers.

In a class called, "Making Locals Work," union staff rep Stan Reese was teaching local leaders how to handle problems and how to build membership participation.

HEU's director of education Karen Dean says the school gives more than 200 union activists an opportunity to step back from the pressures of everyday life in their locals and look at issues in a bigger context.

Power for the poor

Fight for justice for the poor and disabled mirrors union struggle says NDP's Smallwood

by Dan Keeton

NDP CABINET minister Joan Smallwood says she's never been a trade union member, but the former community organizer told a June 1 HEU summer school forum that work among the poor and disabled mirrored the trade union struggle.

"We're trying to move that debate and those values into government, and we're

trying to find ways that we can work together in building coalitions to further those values," she declared.

Unlike powerful lobbies such as B.C.'s lumber interests, "the people that I represent don't have any power," Smallwood said. "I represent the community sector: the unorganized, the people that have no voices, the people that are poor in this province, women and children, the disabled, those are the people I have fought for all my political life."

GAY PRIDE

Summer school also gave members of HEU's gay and lesbian issues group an opportunity to meet, and to unveil the new banner that they and their families will march behind in August's Gay Pride Parade in Vancouver.

The group has also started up a confidential information and support service through the new HEU Lesbian and Gay Hotline. For information on same sex benefits, fighting harassment and other rights, or for emotional support, phone 739-1514, or 1-800-663-5813, local 514, outside the Lower Mainland.



'An aboriginal woman, a union sister'

With a gesture as simple as putting on her HEU jacket, Victoria Jubilee member Trudy Erickson held the Canadian Labour Congress convention spellbound last month.

By slipping her HEU jacket, laden with union buttons, over her red and black vest decorated with emblems of her Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en people, she demonstrated the potential strength of a labour movement united with Canada's First Nations.

"I'm proud to be an aboriginal woman," she told the 2,400 delegates, "but I'm also proud to be a union sister and wear a union jacket."

The hall erupted in a standing ovation that ended with a unanimous vote to establish a seat on the executive for a representative of Canada's First Nations.

The right to such a seat had been established two years before, Erickson said later, but no deadline had

been set. "Aboriginal people on the convention floor could not think of a better time than now. We met as an aboriginal caucus on the morning the resolution was to come to the floor. It was unanimously decided that I would wear my Indian traditional vest to represent the importance of this resolution to aboriginal people and aboriginal unionists across this country."

"The support of the convention floor was astounding."



Labour's plan to create jobs, defend medicare

by Geoff Meggs

CANADA'S unions have decided to make a shorter work-week with no loss of pay the centrepiece of their strategy to save jobs and rebuild the national economy.

HEU's delegates to last month's Canadian Labour Congress convention in Toronto found that the shorter work week negotiated last year with health employers and the NDP government to protect jobs during health care reform, has had a national impact.

And they learned that the negative side of health care restructuring – especially the lack of community services, the attack on quality hospital care and the increasing workload – is threatening medicare right across Canada.

By the end of the week-long convention, which brought together more than 2,000 workers from every part of the country, HEU's delegates had made their mark in the debates on economic policy and health care.

But they also helped push through an important change to the Canadian Labour Congress constitution guaranteeing that a representative of the country's

aboriginal peoples is represented on the CLC executive. (A report on that effort below.)

Convention decisions of direct relevance to HEU members included:

- a commitment to national coordination of the fight to defend public sector bargaining rights, including full support for Nova Scotia public service workers considering a general strike;
- approval of an action agenda for jobs based on negotiation of a shorter work week with no loss in pay;
- agreement to launch a national program to defend Medicare in conjunction with the Canadian Health Coalition; and
- agreement to press for restoration of the national funding formula, abolished by the Tories, which supported the national medicare system.

"We're at a crossroads after 10 years of the corporate economic agenda," said Buzz Hargrove, president of the Canadian Auto Workers, during debate on eco-



WE CAN DO IT Canadian Labour Congress president Bob White.

nomie policy. "We have the choice to accept this agenda or move on and reject the arguments about the deficit. We must say we need an expansion of social programs."

"We need to demand shorter work time and industrial strategy to pull people back to work in this country."

By reducing work time at a Chrysler facility, the union was able to create a third shift employing 1,000 workers, said Gary Parent, of CAW's Windsor local.

HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato told the convention how B.C.'s shorter work week in health care "provided meaningful time off. It prevented the loss of 1,000 jobs."

"We view the shorter work week as a proposal for getting Canada back to work, for giving hope to Canadians that we have a proposal to protect jobs, protect services and create new employment."

"It will take collective bargaining, yes, but it will need political action also. Public sector workers know that regardless of who is in government, we will put forward our members' demands."

The convention linked labour's new economic program with a commitment to defend public services, especially medicare.

In the next month, the CLC will work out a national campaign with the Canadian Health Coalition to defend the medicare system and turn back attacks on health care that have shaken almost every province. The goal of the campaign is to win real health care reform that protects services and jobs while extending medicare protection.

HEU delegates speak their mind

Despite their relatively meagre numbers – the 43 HEU delegates took up only a few rows among the 2,400 trade unionists in the hall – they participated in many of the debates.

Royal Arch local delegate John Rogers spoke out against proposed "workfare programs," which he likened to Depression relief camps.

"Forcing workers to stay in demeaning jobs to maintain benefits is unacceptable," he said. He urged support of a resolution condemning proposals now under development by the federal Liberals.

Victoria local delegate Sandra Doherty warned delegates against the assumption that military intervention could resolve problems like the holocaust in Rwanda.

Speaking against a resolution calling for a larger U.N. peacekeeping force, Doherty noted that more



KEY PLAYERS Some of HEU's delegates to the Canadian Labour Congress.

peacekeepers had not ended the war in Yugoslavia.

"Calling for military intervention may make us feel good because we're asking for something to be done there," she said. "But is this what we really want to be calling for? People are dying but surely (military intervention) might prolong the problem."

Hammering construction cheats

The NDP moves to protect the public and workers from unlawful contractors

VICTORIA has responded to pressure from unions and public sector employers and taken action to clean up the bidding process for public construction and to toughen fair wage protection for construction workers against employer ripoffs.

The moves, announced in May by employment minister Glen Clark, will prevent unscrupulous and unqualified contractors from cheating tax payers and workers on billions of dollars spent yearly on projects like hospitals, schools and roads in B.C.

Provincial fair wage rules, which set minimum pay rates, cover apprenticeship training and hiring practices on most jobs, will now be put into legislation and have the force of law.

Clark's announcements came shortly after HEU and the Carpenters Union staged a boisterous rally April 20 outside St. Paul's Hospital in downtown Vancouver. The unions were protesting the exploitation of workers, wage theft and questionable practices by the notorious non-union contractor Key Engineering, which was doing work at the hospital.

Many workers on the Key project, like carpenter Larry Thomson, went weeks without a pay cheque. At one point an employer representative encouraged Thomson to apply for welfare if he needed money.

Despite Key's poor reputation, St. Paul's officials were forced to award a \$3 million contract to the company because it submitted the lowest bid. Under provincial law covering public construction, the low bid must be accepted, even when the bidder isn't qualified to do the work.

In this case, Key failed to complete the project on time. HEU members at St. Paul's had to bring some of the work up to specification.

The ripoff of Thomson and many other workers on the project is pretty standard stuff in the non-union construction industry, even on projects where existing



SOLIDARITY Hundreds of construction workers rallied April 20 with health care workers at St. Paul's Hospital for new construction tendering policies and an end to exploitation of construction workers.

fair wage protections are in force, says B.C. Provincial Council of Carpenters organizer Gil Arnold.

Arnold estimates that workers on the site have been cheated out of more than \$250,000. Worse, he says, workers like Thomson will likely never be paid in full for their labour, unless they're prepared to spend thousands of dollars in legal costs to take Key and contractors like it to court.

Companies like Key get around fair wage rules by forcing trades people to sign on as independent contractors rather than hourly paid workers.

"It's a condition of employment," Arnold says. "Workers want a regular pay cheque, a pension, and access to unemployment insurance — which you don't get as an independent contractor."

Arnold is angry that St. Paul's, which controls the purse strings on the project, hasn't provided any help for Thomson and his fellow workers.

"You have the results of their labour," said Arnold in a letter to hospital boss Ron Mulchey. "[The workers] have received little, and in some cases absolutely nothing, as payment for that labour."

The provincial Employment Standards Branch — which has general enforcement power — is also ex-

tremely slow to act, Arnold says.

The B.C. government initiatives were hailed as victories by the Carpenters Union, and as setbacks for many aggressive anti-union "open shop" contractors like Key.

Arnold, who will be part of a special task force appointed by Clark to draft a new tendering policy within 10 months, says a new approach could force companies like Key out of business. "If the company's

not qualified, they have no business tendering on public construction."

Even health employers, like Richmond Hospital, were angry with the law — a leftover from the Socred days — forcing

mandatory acceptance of low bid.

In a February letter to government officials, the hospital says it had recently had "an absolutely disastrous experience," with an unqualified contractor, whose low bid had to be accepted. The hospital wants the system changed to lowest qualified bidder.

HEU's Carmela Allevato supports the new tendering policy and tougher fair wage protection for trades people. "The government must ensure that the new regional health boards and community councils are clearly told to follow the new practices," she said.

'Many workers went weeks without a pay cheque'

Where's the wealth? Where's the justice?

In 1992 the Royal Bank made a profit of over \$63 million and paid \$0 in taxes. A Royal Bank teller working in B.C. and making \$25,000 paid \$5,732 in tax. A retired person subsisting on \$9000 (\$6000 below poverty line in a city) paid over \$800.

About 15,750 retired people would have to pay \$800 a year to make up for what the Royal Bank didn't pay if it paid only 20 per cent of its profits in taxes in 1992.

The Royal Bank is just one of hundreds of profitable Canadian corporations that pay little or no tax, or who take advantage of government tax loopholes to delay paying taxes owed.

For example, a recent *Globe and Mail* report found dozens of big corporations that each owed more than \$100 million in interest free deferred taxes.

The total in deferred taxes for this select group of companies alone is about \$30 billion.

Think what a difference this would make to the deficit if it were paid.

Imagine how much money we could have for social programs if these 78 corpo-

rations paid even five per cent interest on their deferred taxes! Five percent interest on the deferred taxes of these few corporations would amount to about a billion and a half dollars a year.

In addition, there are 250 more corporations with outstanding taxes of between \$5 million and \$100 million.

Imagine what would happen if you deferred your taxes!

It isn't fair!

That's why the Action Canada Network is targeting corporate taxes for a dose of truth serum.

The network, which is made up of churches, unions, women's groups, anti-poverty groups, students, seniors, environmentalists and others, wants to challenge the corporate agenda's phobia about deficit control and put an end to the attacks on social programs and the needy by pointing the finger at the greedy instead.

It says that at a time when Canadians are being told that there is no money for job creation, its "Where's the Wealth" campaign is meant to change the national political debate.

The network says there is enough wealth in Canada to provide housing, food and decent jobs for all Canadians.

EXAMPLES OF CORPORATIONS OWING \$100,000,000 OR MORE IN DEFERRED TAXES

Source: *Globe and Mail* report on business Jan. 25, 1994

Corporation	Amount Deferred
Alcan Aluminum	US \$ 955,000,000
BCE Inc.	2,377,000,000
Bell Canada	1,898,700,000
Canadian Pacific Enterprises	1,092,100,000
Canadian Pacific	1,930,600,000
Chrysler Canada	620,600,000
Cominco	244,196,000
General Motors Canada	621,154,000 (1991)

If you would like a copy of the four page list of corporations owing over \$100,000,000 in deferred taxes, call the End Legislated Poverty office in Vancouver at 879-1209.

NDP pension changes will improve coverage

THE PROVINCIAL government has brought in legislation to improve and expand pension coverage offered for the province's 175,000 public sector workers, including about 30,000 HEU members.

The improvements include a more flexible formula for full pension eligibility, reduced early retirement penalties, expanded inflation protection on pension benefits, a whole series of measures to end discrimination against women by recognizing their work in the home and on the job site, and improved medical and extended health coverage.

At *Guardian* press time, the changes to the Municipal Superannuation Plan and three other public sector plans were up for final reading in the legislature.

"These are the first significant improvements to our pension plan changes since 1982," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

"Our NDP government should be congratulated for these progressive changes that will make retirement a

little easier for health care workers," she said.

The pension improvements flow out of a lengthy review of public sector pension plans says finance minister Elizabeth Cull.

"This new package will improve benefits to workers

ment at age 55 is reduced from five to three per cent for each year under age 60. In addition, inflation protection for reduced pensions is expanded.

Equity measures to end discrimination against women workers include new leave of absence provisions to protect benefits eligibility of workers taking maternity or parenting leaves, a five year eligibility credit for women who have worked in the home, and an unlimited opportunity for workers to buy back all previous refunds.

"Many women have interrupted their paid work to take on family responsibilities and have not had equal access to benefits," said the NDP's Penny Priddy, minister of women's equality. "These

changes will improve the fairness of pension plans."

On the down side, says Allevato, the pension legislation will penalize lesbian and gay workers. "Spouse" is now defined in traditional heterosexual terms, which closes the door to benefits for same sex couples.

"This change is the only blot on the government's efforts to improve pension benefits," she said. "Unions should consider challenging it."

PENSION IMPROVEMENTS AT A GLANCE

- ✓ more flexible full pension eligibility formula: age plus years of service totalling 90
- ✓ reduced early retirement penalties and improved inflation protection for early retirees
- ✓ new equity measures to end pension discrimination against women
- ✓ improved basic medical and extended health benefits coverage

with no additional cost to taxpayers," said Cull. Nor will there be premium increases for workers or employers she says, because the improvements will be paid for by better investment returns and the use of surplus pension funds.

Under the proposed changes, a worker will be eligible for full pension benefits when age plus years of service totals 90. The penalty for taking early retire-

August 19 deadline for HEU bursary applications

The deadline to apply for one of HEU's 14 post-secondary education study bursaries for the 1994/95 school year is fast approaching.

August 19 is the date that all applications must be received by the Provincial Office.

The bursaries, with a total value of \$6,700, can be used by members, their children and spouses at any post-secondary institute.

They will be awarded by the bursary committee of the Provincial Executive on the basis of financial need.

All applications should be addressed attention the bursary committee. For further information, contact the Provincial Office, at 734-3431, or 1-800-663-5813.

Kiro laundry back in fold

While health employers are contracting out management services like wild fire, HEU has had some successes in contracting work back in to the health care system.

Kiro Manor, a long-term care facility in Castlegar, has terminated a contract with a private business, and will now have its laundry cleaned by the nearby Trail Regional Hospital.

The hospital's bid provided better mending and linen management services, says Kiro shop steward Jackie Peters.

Another reason, says Peters, was that the private operator just didn't wash on quality or cleanliness.

"It just wasn't up to par," she said.

Kiro had its laundry done in Trail before it took a chance on an private company in 1990.

Normanna members okay first HEU deal

HEU's 40 members at Normanna, a Burnaby long-term care facility that's set for a major expansion, ratified their first deal in June, about a year after they voted to leave the Operating Engineers' Union.

The new members have achieved contract conditions in line with the CCERA Standard Agreement, including improvements that they had in their old contract.

Congratulations and welcome to HEU!



FIGHTING FIRES Quick action by HEU St. Paul's local vice-chairperson Kelly Knox saved his neighbour's Richmond house from destruction April 30 after an arsonist's fire burned the neighbour's motorhome and boat to a crisp. Knox dodged a downed power line and used a garden hose to keep flames from catching on the house until firefighters arrived. Awakened by his dog at 3 a.m., Knox smelled smoke and raced across the street and into action. "All I was thinking about was to save their house," he said. Firefighters later told him that if he hadn't hosed down the house of his vacationing neighbour, it would have been completely torched before they arrived.

DAN KEETON PHOTO

Beware of job share rules

HEU members now have a set of guidelines covering job sharing both inside and outside the Employment Security Agreement (ESA) as a result of a recent ruling by mediator Vince Ready.

But HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato warns that union members should "give careful and thorough consideration to the implications before entering any job sharing setup."

Ready's ruling, which came at the end of a mediation/arbitration process, covers both HEU and B.C. Nurses' Union members. The Health Sciences Association had already agreed on job sharing terms with employers.

Under Ready's award, all job sharing shall be voluntary on the part of workers, and shall involve job sharers from within the same department and classification, except when the employer agrees with the Union to extend job sharing beyond a department or classification.

While job sharing that takes place under the ESA for a labour adjustment purpose will not have a qualifying

period, job sharing that takes place without a labour adjustment purpose will be subject to the three-month qualifying period under Section 14.02 of the HEU Master Collective Agreement.

Job shared positions will be treated as though they are single positions with regard to scheduling and job descriptions. Benefit and pension accruals will be prorated according to the amount of time worked.

An employee who decides to discontinue a job share shall give 30 days notice and then post into a regular position, revert to casual or resign. The remaining employee will have the option of taking the job on a full-time basis.

When the employer decides to discontinue a job share, the job goes to the senior employee, and the other employee will be displaced according to the provisions of the Collective Agreement and the ESA. The employer must give 60 days notice of ending a job share.

Full details on job sharing have been made available to all locals and servicing representatives.

'Give careful consideration to the implications before entering any job sharing setup'

JUNE 18 - 22

B.C. Federation of Labour Women's Summer Institute, SFU, Burnaby.

JUNE 30

Deadline to submit 1993 extended health benefits receipts and claims to CU&C.

JULY 26

Deadline for locals to submit convention resolutions, amendments, and the names of delegates to Provincial Office.

AUGUST 19

Applications for HEU bursaries to attend post-secondary studies must be received by Provincial Office on this date.

AUGUST 23/24

Provincial Executive meeting, Vancouver.

SEPTEMBER 9

Copies of all convention resolutions and amendments distributed to all convention delegates.

SEPTEMBER 21 - 23

Provincial Executive Meeting, Vancouver.

OCTOBER 1

The 3.7 per cent interim comparability increase kicks in for all HEU members covered by an Employment Security Agreement.

OCTOBER 24 - 28

HEU convention and 50th anniversary celebration, Richmond Inn.

NOV. 28 - DEC. 2

B.C. Federation of Labour convention, Vancouver.

So long, smokestack

Tougher safety rules, "whistle blower protection" in new biomed waste plan

HEU IS URGING environment minister Moe Sihota to act quickly on a biomedical waste action plan submitted to him May 2 that will help bring the problem of biomedical waste under control, and shut down B.C.'s 56 outdated hospital incinerators.

The plan was delivered in May by Victoria's waste reduction commissioner Dorothy Caddell, after much consultation with the health care unions.

It's based on protecting health workers, the public and the environment from further risk through new disposal methods using autoclaving units installed at all acute care facilities, reduced waste generation, tougher health and safety rules, and "whistle blower" protection to give workers the power to go public with

disposal violations. Better training and education programs for at-source separation are also key parts of the plan.

The action plan should not have a negative impact on HEU members' jobs in the short term. In the long term, hospitals would serve as biomed waste disposal centres for all health care facilities in a community, which would create jobs and new sources of revenue for hospitals.

On the key question of public versus private operation, Caddell prepared detailed cost estimates to show that a publicly operated system was cost effective. She estimated total annual operating and capital costs for the 120 autoclaving units at B.C. hospitals proposed to be \$2.5 million. By comparison, one Lower Mainland facility alone has spent close to \$1 million during the last three years on a private sector service.

Capital funding estimated at about \$10 million for the autoclaving technology would come from Victoria, but only after hospitals complete waste audits and set waste reduction targets.



Workload campaign grows to 48 locals

by Chris Gaimor

HEU's workload campaign continues to grow, with locals around the province deciding on new ways of dealing with growing workloads that threaten the health of HEU members.

Forty-eight locals are now involved in the program, and many locals have already been successful in getting the message across to their employers that workloads must be moderated.

Workload campaigns involve locals concentrating on small, achievable goals that can be met with relatively little trouble. This helps build

support for campaigns elsewhere in each facility.

Daniel Hingley of the Nanaimo local said unit clerks at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital are meeting to put together a plan to take to management to make their work bearable.

For example, restrictions on times for phone calls to check patients' conditions, better access to copy machines, a runner to move needed files and test results, and better orientation are among the ideas the unit clerks have arrived at to deal with workload problems.

At Kiro Manor in Trail, dealing with workloads is simply a matter of HEU members setting priorities.

"If sick workers aren't replaced, we set our priorities," said Jackie Peters of the Kiro local.

"You can't get all the work done when you're one and a half people short. We try to do things so that the residents don't suffer."

For example, folding laundry may be left for another day, but bathing, feeding and dressing resident gets top priority.

Another popular idea is the workload overload calendar. HEU activists at Swan Valley Lodge in Creston have recorded workload problems on their calendar, and succeeded in getting a weekend care aide.

HEALTH



& SAFETY

Coffee break



All stories guaranteed factual.
Sources this issue: CALM,
Medical Post

Workers clip roaches to highlight job vacancies

When University of Wisconsin bosses tried to save money by leaving 52 janitor positions vacant, cockroaches started to take over.

To highlight the problem, union members offered a prize for the largest cockroach captured on campus. The zoology building had the biggest roach, but the law school had the most species.

The employer's reply: shoot the messenger. The union president received a five-day suspension for her role in the affair.

Layoffs have gone too far when bosses feel the pinch

When the American telecommunications giant GTE decided to thank employees with a good attendance record by offering \$100 and a certificate,

they ran into a hitch. So many word processor workers had been laid off that GTE bosses had to fill in the certificates themselves.

"Reform" bloopers

The saga of health reform driven by a right-wing government in Britain continues to produce more sorry tales, like:

- a paralyzed 83-year-old woman was transported to hospital in a horse trailer after her ambulance was cancelled for the third time;
- staff at a Manchester hospital used dishcloths to cover wounds instead of surgical dressings.

Harassers may face very early discharge

A British hospital in Swindon has decided to punish patients who harass workers by reducing the level of care. Those checking into the facility are



STARDATE 2363.7

warned that "certain behaviour is unacceptable and, if appropriate, the level of service may be reduced if the behaviour does not improve."

Bureaucratic mentality at work

Printed on toilet paper at a British laboratory in the 1970s: "Not for resale."

Notice on menu at harbour-side restaurant of Sydney Opera House: "No refunds for meals taken by seagulls." Attached to the tanks of toilets in a British hospital: "This cistern must not be used for collecting water. Kindly use a tap. If you must use it, at least replace the tap so it is not in danger of being broken."

HEU people

He'll be fishing, fishing, fishing

Jack Gould, a maintenance worker at Halcyon Home in Nakusp, retired in June.

Gould, who held a number of positions in his local, was a strong union member, and had a sense of humour that made a work day easier, says Halcyon local secretary-treasure Barb Fahlman.

An avid fisher, who shared his catch with family and friends, Gould plans to devote more time to — you guessed it — fishing.



DARWIN

Duncan local member dies

Lynne Darwin of the Duncan local died last year after a fight with cancer, at the age of 34. Darwin started working in the food services department of the Cowichan and District Hospital in the 1970's. She'll be missed by her friends and co-workers.

Delta quartet are recent retirees

Late last year, four long-time members at Delta Hospital have said goodbye.

Ingrid Lowka, a housekeeping aide, started at the hospital's extended care unit in 1978. She will be busy with her family in New Westminster.

Dietary aide Meggie Alblas began working in extended care in 1977. She's now moved to Sardis, near Chilliwack, to be near her family.

Dorothy Wilkinson, a cook, was with the hospital also since 1978. She is looking forward to having the free time to enjoy other activities. Wilkinson attended HEU meetings regularly and was always interested in what was going on.

Anne deHaan joined the extended care staff early in 1977 and became admitting supervisor when the acute care hospital opened in 1980. deHaan and her husband have moved to a new home in Westbank to be closer to her family.

Spaens was golden in Golden

Mary Spaens, a 23-year member of HEU, retired in May at Golden Hospital.

Spaens began her hospital career as a part-time dietary aide, then went to work in the laundry full-time. A past chairperson of the Golden local, Spaens was a valuable source of experience for new members.

Spaens, who will be honoured with a retirement party, plans to enjoy her retirement by going camping and travelling.

Meet her at the YMCA

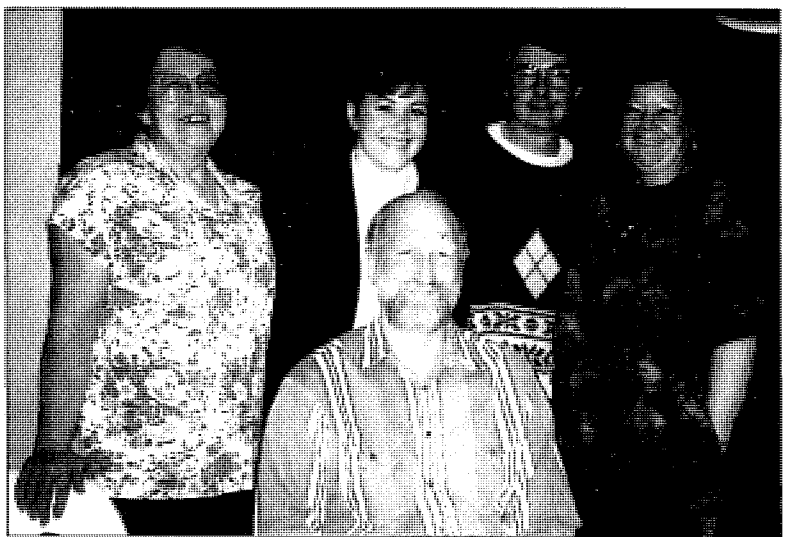
Glengarry Hospital housekeeping aide Elfi Brandstaettner, punched the clock for the last time May 31, after 21 years of service. Brandstaettner, who first worked as a nursing aide for 14 years at the Victoria facility, will be missed by everyone. She plans to spend a good deal of time at the YMCA, and to do some travelling.

Kelowna nursing orderly will relax

Walter Perehudoff, who started working at Kelowna General Hospital in 1979, retired in March.

100 MILE MEETING

Members of HEU's 100 Mile House local met April 16 with their MLA, cabinet minister Dave Zirnheld to discuss concerns over bed closures and employer moves to cut the quality of care in their Interior town. From left are Noreen Fraser, Laurel-Lee Aiken, Edward Swift, Dianne Watrick, and Zirnheld, seated.



Perehudoff served as vice-chair, secretary-treasurer and shop steward in his local. Just plain old relaxing tops his retirement plans.

Guinn's to be "best retirement ever"

That's what Canada Way Care Centre nursing aide Beryl Guinn promises about her future after she retired from the Burnaby facility in March after 16 years of service.

A former trustee for the Canada Way local, Guinn plans to travel extensively, hike and ballroom dance.

Mt. St. Mary veteran to take post-work break

After 24 years as a care giver, Mt. St. Mary Hospital's Aurora Boncajes retired in April.

"It's a good union working for all of us," Boncajes says about HEU. She plans to devote her time to some babysitting, and is considering taking on one-to-one nursing and doing some travelling.

MSA's Weir to have a wet retirement

Phyllis Weir, a housekeeping aide at Abbotsford's MSA Hospital and a 17-year union member, retired at the end of May.

A strong HEU supporter, Weir was a member of the local's social committee and

a regular at local meetings and rallies for years.

Weir will devote more time to more trips, and to swimming.



SENIOR SISTER Kitimat's Annetta Wratschko, foreground, retired this year after 37 years — 74,561 hours on the seniority list.

Wratschko, Atamanchuk, and Mattuiz retire in Kitimat

37-year veteran Annetta Wratschko is among three union members retiring from Kitimat General Hospital.

An LPN, Wratschko started at the old Kitimat hospital,

which was right on the ocean, in 1956 — eight years before Kitimat workers joined HEU.

Wratschko and her husband have moved to Vancouver Island, where the winters are kinder.

Food service worker Jean Atamanchuk has also retired from the hospital after nearly 20 years of service. She plans to travel and visit her children and grandchildren.

And LPN Audrey Mattuiz is preparing for her final day in October after 13 years as an LPN. She too plans to travel, visit family, and also to devote more time to her favourite past-time: bingo.

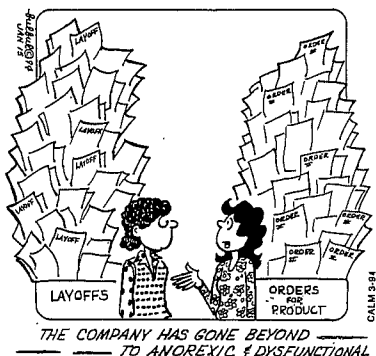
Naicker leaves Dogwood Lodge

Vimla Naicker, a building services worker at Dogwood Lodge in the Lower Mainland, stepped down from her job this spring after 20 years of service.

With her new free time, Naicker will help her husband with scouting, and take a six week trip to Fiji, New Zealand and Australia to visit family and friends.

PUZZLE

Unscramble the words, then unscramble the circled letters to discover the three words missing from the cartoon caption. The scrambled words are all found in the 'Where's the Wealth' article on page 12 of *The Guardian*.



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TQM? Cue up *Working Lean: Challenging Workplace Reorganization*, a film about how auto workers are fighting back.

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Turn on your local meeting with a video from the



For information on available videos and how to order, contact Gail Paquette, Communications Department, Provincial Office, 734-3431 or 1-800-663-5813

Guardian



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THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

MAY/JUNE 1994

Long-term care security

HEU's 3,500 long-term care members working at non-profit facilities have a new contract, job security and the 36-hour week.

PAGE 3

Washington rally

Thousands of U.S. health workers marched for health reform, and HEU was there.



PAGE 5

Rebuilding our vows

The Canadian Labour Congress wants to repair labour's relationship with the NDP.



PAGE 7

We're in the community

HEU members tackle new roles and challenges as we follow health services into the community.



PAGE 8

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