

## Network links in Canada, U.S., Mexico

**A**N UNPRECEDENTED network of health care workers' unions from Canada to Mexico has agreed to work together to fight for quality health care and against corporate efforts to take over the systems that exist.

The three-day meeting in Oakland, California, drew together 200 delegates representing more than one million health care workers from unions across North America.

"This meeting has proved that by sharing the strength of our members we'll be able to build our unions, save health care and move forward to-

gether," HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato told the conference's closing session.

Every major Canadian health union, including HEU and CUPE, was represented at the emergency conference.

U.S. health unions are facing a wave of corporate take-overs that threatens thousands of layoffs. The situation is even more desperate in Mexico.

But the unions of all three nations agreed to share information, support each others' strikes and work for implementation of a Canadian-style medicare system across the continent.

# Guardian 50

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THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NOV/DEC 1994



## HEU'S 19TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION

# Talking change



Convention contributors included (left to right) former president W.D. Black, G.F. Strong delegate Sheila Rowsell and CUPE president Judy Darcy.

### PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

HEU convention delegates approved a membership-wide review of how the union's structure should be changed to meet the challenges ahead.

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### TAKING OUR PLACE IN CUPE

HEU delegates responded to the warm welcome into the ranks of CUPE given by CUPE national president Judy Darcy and secretary-treasurer Geraldine McGuire.

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### MEETING THE MINISTER

Health minister Paul Ramsey promised action to control privatization of health services.

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Overlander local delegate Pam Grone during debate at this year's HEU convention.

KATE WILLIAMS PHOTO



## B.C. LABOUR VOWS TO BEAT MACBLO

The B.C. Federation of Labour voted unanimously Nov. 29 to undertake a massive boycott campaign to defeat Macmillan Bloedel's attempts to destroy the union shop. MB's efforts to build a new mill in Port Alberni with a "rat union" contractor have sparked job action by Building Trades workers and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers' Union.

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## COMMENT

# Coming year offers chance to prepare for the future

by Carmela Allevato

**T**HE COMING YEAR promises to be one of preparation and consolidation for HEU members after two years of hectic activity. The agenda developed by HEU convention delegates is designed to set our course for the coming decade and that's going to take a great deal of internal discussion, debate and consideration.

Much of that debate will occur in a unique process called Making Our Union Strong, a series of meetings and membership consultations to determine how we may need to change our union to deal with the challenges of health care reform and medicare funding cuts.

At the end of the process we'll have a series of recommendations — including possible constitutional amendments — for review at our next convention.

For HEU activists, it will be a year of new opportunity. The convention established new policies designed to give locals more resources and autonomy to pursue the members' interests. We'll be strengthening our union from the bottom up.

Does that mean employers can expect a quiet year from HEU members? Of course not! We'll still be enforcing our contract and demanding our seat at the New Directions table. We'll be fighting to win implementation of ergonomic regulations to make our workplaces safe.



And if necessary, we'll be ready to take political action to defeat the growing attacks from the provincial Liberal and Reform parties on health care reform in general and our Employment Security Agreement in particular.

The Liberal Party, ably assisted by *Vancouver Sun* columnist Vaughn Palmer, has been especially unprincipled in its attacks on HEU members, claiming falsely that many were sitting at home collecting full pay because of the Employment Security Agreement.

We have answered these falsehoods, which are nothing more than a smear of frontline health workers who have been doing their utmost to keep the system working effectively. We'll be doing all in our power in 1995

to put the truth before the people of B.C.

In one sense, however, these attacks are a backhanded compliment to the efforts of HEU members who have won a measure of security and stability in the course of health reform.

The health unions have been consistent champions of real health reform and harsh critics of the medical elite — including doctors and

administrators — who are working with the Liberals to maintain their power over the medicare system.

HEU's proud history has shown that health workers, organized in an industrial union, are one of the strong-

## 'Health unions have been consistent champions of real health reform and harsh critics of the medical elite'

est defences of our medicare system. The enemies of medicare know that as well as we do.

That's why our internal review is so important. If we do our job well, HEU will be prepared to defend and expand medicare — and defend health care workers — into the next century.

So 1995 promises to be an exciting and challenging year. On behalf of the Provincial Executive and HEU staff, best wishes to all *Guardian* readers for the holiday season.

## letters

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

### HEU Nelson staff get kudos from member

I would like to thank Stan Reese, Mark Atkinson, and a very big thanks to Heather Suggitt for being there for me during my appeal with the WCB.

Heather went above and beyond for me.

I'm proud to be a member of the HEU, and appreciate every thing that was done for me through the union for all these months.

GLADYS BLOBEL,  
Creston local

### The Guardian is popular in Whitehorse

I wish to subscribe to your union newspaper. I was a member of HEU in Campbell

River for three years, and have been so kindly sent papers from your outfit for the past two years, even though I'm living in the Yukon.

I realize that you cannot go on supplying a non-member indefinitely, however, I still work in a hospital and find your paper invaluable. Other employees also take time to read it when I post it on the union bulletin board.

Please let me know how much a subscription would be. Thank you for your time.

DONA DORIAN,  
Whitehorse,  
Yukon

• Thanks for the praise! Sister Dorian will continue to receive the *Guardian* free of charge because in addition to HEU members, the

paper is mailed to more than 1,500 individuals, politicians, organizations and media outlets across Canada. The only additional cost is postage — about \$0.40 an issue.

### Port Alberni open shop aid is true solidarity

• HEU convention delegates unanimously voted to support the fight of building trades workers against Macmillan Bloedel in Port Alberni, and to donate \$1,000 to assist. Here's a letter of thanks received by the union.

On behalf of the B.C. and Yukon Territory Building and Construction Trades Council, I would like to extend sincere thanks for your generous financial contribution to assist us in our struggle against Macmillan Bloedel.

The situation the Building Trades Council is engaged in with Macmillan Bloedel is not isolated to our organization, as it could have greater ramifications for the labour movement as a whole.

If Macmillan Bloedel is successful in its attempts to introduce the open-shop policy into our industry, it will not be long before other employers attempt to introduce the open-shop policy and standardize this practise throughout this province. This would turn back the clock on progressive labour practices that the trade union movement has proudly won over the years for working people in this province.

Your contribution to our defense fund is a testament to the solidarity within the trade union movement to fight against these regressive practises and is received with sincere thanks.

LEN WERDEN,  
President,

B.C. and Yukon Building and Construction Trades Council

### HEU support boosts morale of striking Bay workers in Kamloops

On behalf of the United Steelworkers of America, Local 898, we would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks for your show of support by respecting and joining our picket line at The Bay in Kamloops.

It is this kind of solidarity and support that will continue to provide the labour movement with gains toward better working conditions now and in the future. Your efforts have gone a long way in helping newly-organized workers understand the meaning of solidarity.

With your invaluable contribution, the increase in morale among our brothers and sisters has been immeasurable.

ELIZABETH SHYMKO,  
USWA Local 898,  
Kamloops

• HEU Kamloops activists have lent their support to The Bay workers in Kamloops, who at press time were still on strike to win a fair contract.

## Guardian

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

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# What we're up to

## HEU organizing drive continues all over province

HEU continues to organize new members in facilities from one end of B.C. to the other.

HEU's new certifications include Tumbler Ridge Health Centre and Pemberton Health Centre, both diagnostic and treatment centres, Wilson Place in Port Coquitlam, a for-profit long-term care facility, Brock

House, a group home in Victoria, and the Trail and District Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

As well, the certification for Headstart, a head injury facility in Peachland, moved from CUPE to HEU.

## Unions challenge Victoria on criminal record search of public employees

HEU has joined a number of B.C. unions to protest Victoria's plan to require that public employees who are in contact with children undergo a mandatory criminal records check.

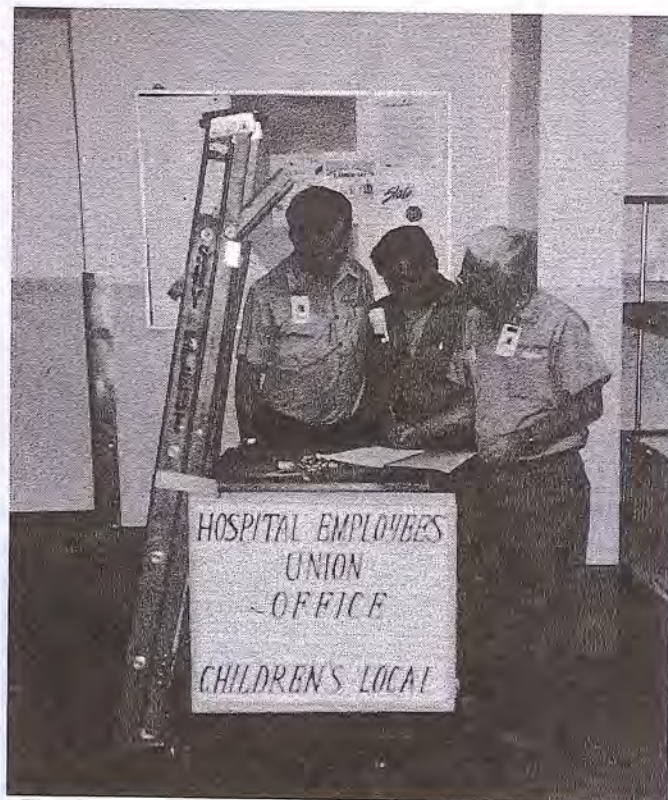
While the unions state their support of the government's efforts to create legislation that would protect children from the risk of abuse, the unions list a number of concerns in a joint letter to attorney general Colin Gabelmann and social services minister Joy MacPhail.

HEU members at B.C.'s Children's Hospital have been trying for months to get an office for the local out of an administration which is using space in the former Shaughnessy Hospital for many other purposes. For the moment, local members David Shocks, Mike Borason and Bob Rodgers are operating out of an electrical cart.

The unions suggest record searches required by the legislation should be done by a central agency that can send only verified information to employers.

As well, the unions state that in cases where employment is denied, the prospective employee should have a fair and speedy avenue of appeal over disputed records. Prospective employees should have full access to information used to deny employment, the union letter says.

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IT'S OFFICIAL HEU president Fred Muzin and Canadian Union of Public Employees national president Judy Darcy shake hands after signing documents officially affiliating HEU with CUPE. Looking on at the Dec. 7 ceremony in Ottawa are HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato, CUPE secretary-treasurer Geraldine McGuire and HEU financial secretary Mary LaPlante.

## Fewer health workers, more administrators

If you have the feeling that the ranks of management in health care are continuing to grow, you're right.

The latest figures from the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency show that there are 1.9 per cent more non-contract management personnel in B.C. hospitals as of July, 1994, than there were the year before.

By contrast, the ranks of HEU members have fallen by 3.58 per cent. There were 5.42 per cent fewer B.C. Nurses' Union members and 1.61 per cent fewer Health Sciences Association members working in acute care facilities. Overall hours worked by unionized staff fell by 4.0 per cent.

Under the Employment Security Agreement, non-contract personnel are supposed to be reduced along with unionized workers.

"We are seriously concerned to hear that management has once again managed to escape the pain of restructuring," said HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato.

"Employers have failed to do their part in shifting resources to the community, while unionized workers have done their part."

In all, some 1,593 full-time equivalent staff or 3.12 million paid hours were cut in the first year of the ESA.

Allevato said management staff must be cut by 5.9 per cent in the coming year to meet the target set under the ESA.

"Management's failure to bear its load of reductions has cost the health care system \$13 million in salaries for the extra managers," Allevato said.

"It is ironic that many of the employers who cannot hold the line are busy attacking the ESA as a costly agreement, when in fact managers are the only ones who have not done their part to transfer resources from hospitals to the community," she added.

## First contracts won for new locals

### Hawthorn strike ends with arbitration deal

HEU is making headway in its effort to negotiate first contracts to cover newly organized union members across the province, including two private facilities where HEU members were on picket lines.

Members at the Courtyard Gardens long-term care facility in Richmond won pay increases of up to 40 per cent in a new contract handed down Nov. 15 by arbitrator Colin Taylor. Courtyard members waged a bitter and successful fight with their employer that included a month-long lockout.

The private payer facility is partly owned by Counsel Corp., a Toronto-based conglomerate, and operated by Diversicare, a U.S. company with close ties to Counsel.

At Hawthorn Park in Kelowna, a five-week strike forced Counsel and Diversicare to agree to an arbitrated contract settlement that will be decided by Dec. 15.

Members at Bevan Lodge in Abbotsford should get an agreement before Christmas, as their dispute is also set to go to arbitration.

Contracts were also completed in mid-November for about 50 health workers at two Lower Mainland facilities: Win-trestle, a government funded for-profit centre in Surrey, and Valley Haven, a non-profit home in Chilliwack. These new members won the benefits and protections of HEU's standard long-term care contract.

Union members at two diagnostic and treatment centres in Pemberton and Tumbler Ridge also have new contracts, winning the master collective agreement.

More than 60 new HEU members at the Northcrest Care Centre in Richmond, a funded, for-profit facility, also

have a first contract. They won the standard agreement plus employment security in a deal ratified in mid-October.

About 80 HEU members working in Western Human Resources group homes in the Lower Mainland and Victoria also ratified a first contract which provides major pay gains. The two-year contract expires in March, 1995, and bargaining will begin soon for a new contract.

"We've won some real victories," says HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato. "Our refusal to bargain concessions and our efforts to win the best possible deal are paying off. New union members have made significant gains."

First contracts will also soon be decided for many more new members.

Although many issues have been agreed to at Delta's Garden Manor long-term care facility, the local voted to strike after the employer's refusal to agree to such issues as employment security caused talks to break down.



## WHAT WE'RE UP TO



HEU staffers and Provincial Executive members joined a picket outside Pacific Press in Vancouver in November when unionized workers at the *Province* and *Vancouver Sun* were locked out. The lockout ended after the employer and workers agreed to a new five-year contract.

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### Joining labour councils

The Chemainus local and the Cowichan Lodge local have

joined many other HEU locals in signing up with their local labour council, in this case the Nanaimo, Duncan and District Labour Council.

HEU president Fred Muzin said the local's affiliation helps keep other trade unionists better informed on HEU issues, which will "allow HEU to better prepare for 1996 bargaining and the election that same year of community health councils."

All HEU locals are being urged to affiliate with their local labour councils.

### Executive sets policy for political donations

The HEU Provincial Executive has decided on a policy covering the many requests received by the union to buy tickets to political dinners and other fundraising functions.

Under the policy, HEU will donate up to \$1,000 a year in response to requests from politicians who the executive believes support HEU's aims and objectives.

Seats at functions where HEU purchases tickets will be available to members on a first-come-first served basis.

More information on this policy is available from financial secretary Mary LaPlante.

### Okanagan acts to get handle on patient focused care

HEU members from across the Okanagan came out in droves to a special Nov. 16 meeting in Kelowna to discuss patient-focused care.

More than 150 members heard details from the comprehensive research report commissioned by HEU, HSA and BCNU on PFC and similar work reorganization schemes from the union's research analyst Brendan Dick.

Secretary-businessmanager Carmela Allevato reviewed fightback options.

"Patient-focused care is an issue that we're zeroing in on," says Kelowna General local chairperson Maureen Shepherd.

Concerned that her employer would follow in the footsteps of Chilliwack, Shepherd and her local executive organized the meeting.

"What I've heard from the membership is that it was an excellent presentation. Members now know more about the issue. They know what to watch for," said Shepherd.

### LPNs make gains at Prince George

LPNs at Prince George Regional Hospital are poised to make some significant gains two years after a decision by

# G.F. Strong unity deals blow to Versa

Health care workers at the G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre in Vancouver say three-union unity and coalition work with patients and families was the key to success in their battle to drive Versa Food Services out of their facility.

After a well-attended demonstration Oct. 25 in the facility's lobby, G.F. Strong bosses caved in, shutting down the proposed Versa contract and firing the administrator responsible.

Members of all three unions at the site had done a classic job of demonstrating that the contracting-out proposal was bad for patients and for health care.

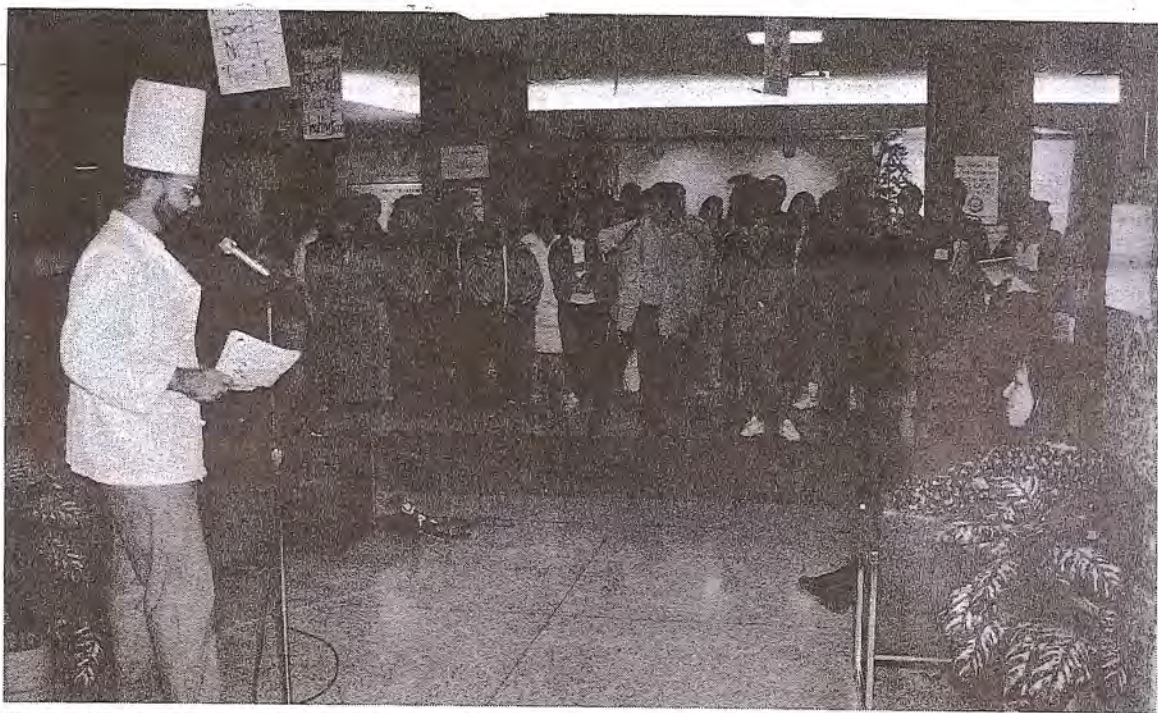
Most objectionable was a proposed two-tier diet system, with basic food for all patients and a more exotic menu for those prepared to pay extra.

"This is not closer to home, this is closer to the New York Stock Exchange," charged food service supervisor Diane Michaels.

Cook and HEU member Ulli Eggar condemned the hospital for failing to consult with its own workers, who had proposed to tackle the challenge of improving services without requiring any of the high consulting fees charged by Versa.

(The hospital has now agreed to hear the workers' proposals.)

"The Versa plan would impose \$291,000 in costs in the first year," Eggar charged.



CONTRACTING IN HEU cook Ulli Eggar addresses demonstration in lobby of G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre against proposal to contract out meals to Versa Services. The employer withdrew contracting out plans after demonstration and other union actions.

## Agency opens training doors for HEU members

More than 90 HEU members have enrolled in training programs funded by the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency to meet the needs of health care workers facing displacement or making career changes.

A further 60 HEU members have requested career counselling, a related agency-funded program that helps displaced workers and workers threatened with displacement consider career options. The agency and its programs were created as part of the Employment Security Agreement signed in 1993 between health care unions, employers and the B.C. government.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity," said displaced Pleasant Valley Health Centre payroll clerk Ron Dawson, now enrolled in a business administration diploma course jointly funded by his employer and the agency's Training Assistance Program.

Six months of continued wages while training helped

Dawson, displaced Nicola Valley laundry worker Linda Fuerst, former Shaughnessy Hospital worker Craig Anderson and Menno Hospital food services worker Doreen Hiebert, among others, move toward new careers.

Workers interested in training beyond six months have also been helped by an agency agreement with the federal Human Resources Development Ministry.

Although the agency cannot ensure unemployment benefits for workers opting to leave employment for training, the federal government has agreed the B.C. health care industry is downsizing and has authorized employment offices to offer full benefits where possible to anyone registered in HLAA training programs.

Fuerst is enrolled in a business secretary program, followed by a year of office systems, leading to a career



HIEBERT



FUERST

in computer services. "Knowing more about computers will give me a greater edge in getting a job."

A two-year B.C. Institute of Technology/University of B.C. Industrial teaching program is helping Anderson to make a necessary career change. "It was inevitable that somewhere down the road there was going to have

to be a career change and getting this help is a bonus."

Opting to train upon receiving her displacement notice rather than exercise internal bumping rights was the right move, said Hiebert. "This is absolutely fantastic."

The Training Assistance Program covers tuition, books and materials, childcare costs in excess of a worker's usual childcare requirements, and — for training outside the employee's region — accommodation and transportation costs.

To be accepted, a training application must serve a labour adjustment purpose. In other words, it must create a vacancy for a displaced employee from another facility or prevent displacement within the facility.



## WHAT WE'RE UP TO

the hospital to eliminate LPN positions.

A number of the LPNs have just completed special upgrading and refresher courses at the local community college, paid for by the employer and on paid time.

The increased training opportunities – which will again be offered in the spring – is the first step towards a broader redeployment of LPNs in the workplace.

HEU staff rep Katherine Moffat, who worked with the local executive and LPN committee on the issue, says it's a sign that the hospital is seriously rethinking its earlier decision to eliminate the valuable LPN positions.

"It's good news for LPNs across the province because Prince George Regional is looking at creative ways to bring LPNs back into the work-

place after their jobs have been eliminated," Moffat said.

Discussions between the hospital and HEU's LPN committee have been ongoing for a number of months.

### CUPE supports national student protest strike

The Canadian Federation of Students has called a national strike for Wednesday, Jan. 25, to protest the federal government's plans to slash its contributions to post-secondary education.

As part of its social security review, the federal government proposes halting its grants to universities and colleges, replacing the grants with more money for student loans. Students claim that the resulting tuition increases will put education out of the reach of low income Canadians.

HEU president Fred Muzin and G.F. Strong local member Sheila Rowswell were among the participants in a one-day occupation of a Vancouver Unemployment Insurance office. The occupation was held to protest the federal government's social policy review, which will see major cutbacks to unemployment insurance.

The student strike has been endorsed by the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

"The worst mistake any country can make is to cut support for education, training and retraining," said CUPE national president Judy Darcy. "We cannot build a country by undermining the very people who will lead it into the 21st century."

CUPE's membership includes workers employed in post-secondary institutions. HEU is now affiliated with CUPE.



**HELPING MEXICAN WOMEN** during a visit to the St. Paul's local office in Vancouver, union organizer Hilda Ramirez explains the huge obstacles working women in Mexico face every day.

# Fighting for rights

## Hilda Ramirez organizes Mexican workers who don't know their rights

by Dan Keeton

Imagine a country where most of the trade unions are controlled by governments and employers.

Imagine that your task is to organize the people of that country, most of whom have little experience of elementary labour rights.

Imagine you're a woman union organizer in a country where women have even less appreciation of those rights.

Imagine that, and you've pretty much summed up the day-to-day working life of Hilda Ramirez.

That might be a daunting task for the most seasoned Canadian trade unionist. But Ramirez, an organizer for Mexico's Authentic Workers Front, or FAT, displays an upbeat outlook.

"I enjoy my work so much I don't even think of it as work," she remarks through a translator during a visit with HEU members at St. Paul's Hospital.

Ramirez was in Vancouver on the last leg of a tour of Western Canada telling Canadians how the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, is affecting Mexican workers.

Many Canadians oppose NAFTA because they see employment slipping south to low-wage ghettos in Mexico. But Mexican workers are also feeling the bite of tariff-free borders, in part because their formerly large textile industry is withering in the face of cheap imports from the Far East.

Ramirez organizes in the textile and steel industries in the Mexico Valley Region and helps educate workers on issues such as collective agreements, negotiations and the law. The workers are technically union members. But these are unions where members never have meetings and have no right to elect their leaders. Unions are dominated by the companies and the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, which has ruled Mexico for most

of the this century, usually through ballot box fraud. To help workers break away from the company union, the FAT must work underground.

"We get together with two or three workers. If they're interested, they will tell us honestly if they think there are others in the factory who will work with them. Then we let them know the risk," Ramirez

### BALANCING



### IT ALL

## 'You must remain calm and not give in to provocations'

explains. "Once that's established we start to create the consciousness and educate them. We really stress that they need to learn how to defend themselves."

There is no secret ballot. When it comes time to vote on affiliation with the Front, workers are ushered one by one into a room with a government mediator and the company president. They must declare their choice vocally and sign a statement.

"If we lose the vote the company will fire those people who voted for us. We don't let them down. We take the company to court."

The work can be risky for the organizers as well. "When it's time for the vote, the government sends in thugs. Any violence, and the vote is disqualified."

"The last time I was standing there with a sign in my hand, a thug came up and tore it up and threw the pieces in my face. But you must remain calm and not give in to provocations."

The college-educated Ramirez was born in Mexico City to a working class family. She began her career as a workers' legal advocate and was eventually approached by the Front to help the organizing drive.

She is not married. "As a woman in my society it would be very hard to have a family with the kind of job I have. My whole life is my work. The only day I get off is Sunday."

About 25 per cent of the workforce is women, but as yet, the FAT has no women's sector. Ramirez encourages women to get involved as much as possible, which is difficult because many hold three jobs: factory work, work in the home and work as street vendors to help make ends meet in Mexico's depressed economy.

"I try to get women to become delegates (to conferences). Very few women are in representative positions. When a woman agrees, I assure them I'll stand behind them and be with them all the way."

The Front's successes are modest given the power of state, corporation and company-unions arrayed against it.

"I'm always optimistic and have to remain so. It's very hard to get workers to leave their unions and come to us (because of intimidation). They're not really union members in the first place."

The Front's goal is help workers become self-sufficient. Says Ramirez, "My greatest personal satisfaction is when I get to work with someone who doesn't know his or her rights, and then they are able to do it without me."



## PRESIDENT'S DESK



# Don't play Liberals' Dismantle game

by Fred Muzin

**T**HE LATEST CRAZE this holiday season comes from our own federal Liberal government. It's a game called "Dismantle," free trade corporate greed for the 21st Century. The playing pieces consist of Mullooneys that decrease in value the longer the game goes on, as more and more countries are added to Hemispheric Free Trade Agreements (HAFTAs). Players must stay current about exchange rates.

Chance cards that eliminate different parts of Canada's social services are drawn every time you land in debtor's prison. The object of the game is to circle the world, collect all the chance cards and establish a new "race to the bottom line" global minimum wage.

Lloyd Axworthy's Social Policy Review that has been touring the country is nothing more than a hoax. The government is waging a massive \$12 million propaganda campaign to convince Canadians we can no longer afford our quality social programs.

They insist that Unemployment Insurance benefits discourage people from working and what repeat users of UIC really require is retraining.

Axworthy is proposing a three-tier system — some people will be ineligible for any benefits, others who infrequently use UIC will be covered as now, while frequent users will be offered "adjustment" benefits that require participation in retraining initiatives.

They claim our education system is too expensive and students should pay more of the cost, even if it means incurring debt loads exceeding \$70,000, or utilizing funds that a few have put aside in retirement funds.

Prime Minister Chretien's review of medicare is waiting in the wings. He is gauging our response to Axworthy's pronouncements. The Liberals are unable to deliver on their promise of jobs, jobs, jobs because they will not look at new ideas. Retraining becomes a frustrating, meaningless exercise if jobs don't exist. Imposing onerous debt loads on students only returns us to education for the rich.

The best way for Canadians to reduce reliance on our social programs is to create productive, decent paying jobs. Fewer people are working, but longer and longer hours. Axworthy neglects to consider a reduction in the 40-hour work week with no loss in pay.

The right wing agenda is designed not to reduce the deficit, but to increase corporate profits and control over workers. If we are truly concerned about the national debt, we should revise the unfair taxation system in Canada and prevent many large multinationals from paying no taxes at all.

The latest powerful attack on Canada's social safety net must be responded to clearly and strongly. We must educate our members about the issues. We must also work with coalitions, community groups and the B.C. Federation of Labour to send Ottawa the message that we will not accept any dismantling of our social programs.

In the real spirit of Christmas, we can give each other the gift that we all need — quality social programs!



# Alberta experiments with health cuts

by Kathleen Connors, chairperson, Canadian Health Coalition

The stories from Alberta are just the beginning of a health care system that has been forced into chaos and where the patient is the loser.

The health care system has become an economic exercise where the bottom line is all important. The public has just begun to feel what it is like in Klein's "new reality" — a hard, uncaring place where the sick, the elderly, and the unemployed are forced to bear the burden.

Ralph Klein will not succeed in his experiment. Support is high for his government now, but as the consequences of the across-the-board cuts sink in, his support will no doubt disappear.

Already there are cracks in his program as Klein criticizes the media and unions for publicizing horror stories, such as the three-month-old girl with whooping cough who was twice turned away from hospitals and finally admitted when her heart stopped.

Klein and his government have said that the isolated incidents have nothing to do with them. He has even gone as far as to say that the hospital workers may be putting people at risk to get headlines. The government quite simply does not want to be accountable.

Cuts to other departments will have a major effect on health.

Over 25,000 people have been cut off welfare. Without any money to support

themselves some will move to other provinces but many will stay and suffer. The health care system will pick up a lot of the casualties from Klein's policies, with fewer resources.

The Alberta government believes there is too much fat in the system. Their plan is to cut \$700 million of Alberta's \$4 billion annual health budget over three years. Unfortunately many of the cuts have not even been felt by the public yet.

Much of the government's dirty work is being done by the regional health boards who are announcing the cuts.

Recently the health boards of Calgary and Edmonton announced hospital closures, thousands of layoffs, and reduced services. The chair of the Calgary board is quoted as saying, "We will have an outstanding system in Calgary...a model for other places when we are finished with it."

Unfortunately, other governments are looking at the Alberta experiment, and if Klein is seen to get away with it then they will follow.

We cannot let our social programs be damaged so severely that they become worthless. Our health care system helps define us as a country — how we care for and about each other as Canadians.

Those of us who do not live in Alberta may be breathing a sigh of relief that it is not happening in our province. But make no mistake — we are all Albertans in this fight.

## VOICES

# Friends show true Christmas meaning

by Julie Eckert

Shortly before Christmas my son, who has a heart bigger than all outdoors, phoned and asked if he could bring three friends home for Christmas dinner. "They have no place to go and won't be getting any presents." My thoughts were, "How sad," and my reply was, "We'd be delighted, and they'll all have presents."

On Christmas day, my husband and I had the pleasure of meeting three extraordinary young men. Dressed in baggy clothes, jeans with gaping tears, heads with shaved sides and long tops, pony tails, and baseball caps, they used expressions like, "I just snapped," "It was so funny I cry-laughed," "This is wicked," — a new language I began to understand by the end of the night.

The gifts were opened, old clothes were tossed aside and new ones put one with several trips to the bathroom to view the results. The gratitude was overwhelming. The shoes for one size 13 didn't quite fit, and he apologized for having big feet. It was the true meaning of Christmas for us.

I guess it was their humour, as they found something funny in every tragic tale they told that made me feel these were amazing young men.

One's father beat him regularly to "make me tough," another's



# 'We hear so much criticism of our young people'

mother went through many violent relationships, and his 13-year old sister was murdered, and one step-father criticized so painfully that the kid couldn't stay home.

In their short lives, these young men have seen more violence and suffered more emotional and physical pain than most people experience in a lifetime. But these kids are survivors! So, be patient.

If this country's economy comes crashing down around us, the wealthy and those comfortable in their lives will be leaping out of the windows of tall buildings and feeling sorry for themselves, but not these kids. They have already experienced the hard knocks in life and have made it. So, be patient.

We hear so much criticism of our young people. Ne'er-do-wells, no direction, lazy, druggies...and yet we forget that in order to finish high school, go to college, and get a job, it takes skills and abilities. Skills and abilities are taught by parents who love, guide, direct and protect their children. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize these kids haven't had that, so be patient.

They work sometimes, get welfare sometimes, scam sometimes, sleep wherever there is a bed or sofa, but they are here and they are alive, and for that I thank God.

They may not be the way you want them to be, but they are trying. Stop criticizing. Help and be patient while they take a little longer to fit in and find how they can contribute to our world, because they will.

• Julie Eckert is a licensed practical nurse who now works in the HEU's classification department. She wrote this article last January.



# Labour

NOTEWORTHY NEWS ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE HERE AND ABROAD

## B.C. unions unite to fight 'rat' unions at Mac Blo

by Dan Keeton

The Macmillan Bloedel paper mill in the Vancouver Island city of Port Alberni has been behind picket lines since September, when members of the building trades unions put their anger over what they see as the company's betrayal into action.

Recently that anger exploded into violence when an open-shop firm, TNL Construction, attempted to serve orders from the Labour Relations Board on pickets and cross the line set up around the mill's Nexgen project.

Labour hit back hard against the forest giant when it declared a boycott of Macmillan Bloedel at the B.C. Federation of Labour convention Nov. 28 to Dec. 2.

What angered the Building Trades workers was Mac Blo's employment of TNL on an expansion project for the mill. TNL's workers belong to the Canadian Iron and Steel Workers' Union, which organized labour terms a "rat" union.

Employer-dominated unions such as Canadian Iron and Steel were set up in the past decade following the weakening of traditional building trades unions using anti-labour legislation passed by the Socreds in the 1980s.

Workers under "rat" union contracts usually make less in wages than their



**NO RATS** Hundreds of striking and protesting trade unionists, including a group from HEU, took their anger over Macmillan Bloedel's plan to give building contracts to builders using "rat" unions to Mac Blo's Vancouver headquarters.

genuinely unionized counterparts and have no control of their union's affairs. "Rat" unions provide a convenient cover for employers trying to foster the illusion that their operations are unionized.

Entering the picture in the last month was the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers' Union. CEP Local 592 represents the workers at the Port Alberni mill, who went on strike in part over the issue of contracting-out of union jobs.

Local 592 president Doug Lesire says the local cooperated with Mac Blo two years ago in planning the Nexgen project. He said the union was assured the project would be built by Building Trades workers, a practice the company had followed for almost 50 years.

Lesire said mill manager Ted Williams told a CBC TV reporter that, "In five years, there won't be any unions in Port Alberni."

CEP members joined the Building Trades on the line around the entrance to the Nexgen project, repelling attempts to truck in TNL workers until TNL took its LRB order to court, winning restrictions on pickets.

Len Werden, president of the B.C. and Yukon Territory Building Trades Council, vows his members will continue to block access to the site.

"If you've got a lifetime of unemployment to face, a jail term right now doesn't mean too much," he told the *Guardian*.

Another major weapon is labour's boycott of Mac Blo. "If 300,000 people (union members in B.C.) decide to support it and that (effort) expands, I think somebody will get a very clear message," Lesire explained.

HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato said the issue "has an impact on every single community. The big corporations have gotten together and have decided that they're going to drive wages down. They're going to drive unions out of our province."

## New York pact inspired by B.C.

More than 30,000 New York hospital workers, members of Local 1199 of the Hospital and Health Care Workers' Union, have ratified a breakthrough employment security agreement they say was inspired by the employment security agreement won in B.C.

The agreement is a milestone for U.S. health workers, who face literally hundreds of thousands of layoffs as corporate mergers sweep the private health care system.

"This is an enormous accomplishment," union president Dennis Rivera told members, "coming as it does in the midst of a fundamental restructuring of the health care industry."

The no concessions agreement gives worried employers several years of stability while they prepare for restructuring.

It allows increased flexibility in assigning and retraining the workers.

But the workers concerned have employment security for the life of the agreement provided they have at least two years of seniority. Even those with less seniority have much-improved job protection.

The agreement provides for moderate wage increases — four per cent this year and three per cent in 1996 and 1997 — as well as action to achieve pay equity for LPNs.

The challenge, Rivera admits, will be keeping workers informed and active as restructuring proceeds. The agreement does not stop restructuring, it protects workers from the worst impacts.

## B.C. Fed presses for community health

by Dan Keeton

B.C.'s House of Labour must press the provincial government to make sure community-based health care is in place before downsizing the acute care sector, delegates to the B.C. Federation of Labour's recent convention agreed.

And a member of the Hospital Employees' Union was the top vote-getter in elections to the executive council at the federation's 39th annual convention.

The week-long convention beginning Nov. 28 also revamped the federation's constitution, launched a boycott against Macmillan Bloedel products, roundly condemned the B.C. government's informal public-sector wage controls, and passed a number of motions relating to health care.

Key among these was one which criticized the province for being "unable to demonstrate an adequate continuation of services in the community as the acute care sector is downsizing."

The resolution commits the federation to demand the provincial government establish publicly-run community services to pick up jobs and health care services lost through cutbacks in acute care. It also calls on the province to slow down the pace of those cutbacks.

Mary Pat Wiley, an HEU delegate from Prince George, said the hospital administration there is closing beds on wards while creating a "holding unit" consisting of small rooms with a lack of privacy.

Meanwhile, patients undergoing major surgery are sent home after a day with little home care available. "It's unacceptable," she said.

In a similar vein, delegates carried an amended HEU resolution that committed the federation to lobby for the protection of health care workers' jobs during the long restructuring process.

Another resolution demanded the province cease all cuts to hospitals until adequate community services are in place and called for trade union campaigns to fight health care cuts.

Also adopted was a demand that the provincial government change its mind and allow health care workers to sit on community health councils. The motion from the Burnaby HEU local said conflict-of-interest guidelines should be in place to provide necessary restrictions on voting.

Delegates also demanded quick action from the Workers' Compensation Board to implement recommendations regarding workplace ergonomics. The motion pointed out that the WCB has paid out millions of dollars for musculoskeletal and other repetitive strain injuries. Employers are fighting the proposals, which are the result of two years of hearings.

Teresa Prentice of the Queen's Park local, said current regulations allow the WCB to phone employers for their opinion on a worker's complaint. "The employer can say anything about you on your behalf without having any grounds,



PRENTICE



DAVIES

and yet you have no right to respond to any allegations," she related.

The convention turned its guns on "wage guidelines" enacted by the new B.C. Public Sector Employers Council. The council recently imposed its regulations on the North Vancouver school district, disrupting the negotiating process.

The federation's constitution was amended to allow the province's 14 largest unions to select their own federation vice-presidents, replacing the system of electing executive officers at the convention.

Those unions also select two members each for the B.C. Fed's executive council. This development won support from a broad cross-section of delegates, because it ends the former "slate vote" system.

The two top officers continue to be elected at the convention, which returned president Ken Georgetti and secretary treasurer Angela Schira unopposed.

There was still an election for four labour council representatives to the executive council, however. HEU member Marianne Davies of the Courtenay and Campbell River Labour Council topped the poll, receiving 736 votes.

Delegates decided that full B.C. Fed conventions will take place every second year instead of every year, with smaller policy conventions planned for alternate years.



RIVERA





### Doctors hit at convention

HEU officially supports putting physicians and all other health providers in Canada on salary after convention delegates passed a resolution criticizing the effects of fee-for-service medicine.

The resolution calling for HEU to lobby for more facilities where all providers are paid on a salaried basis passed after Sheila Rowsell of the G.F. Strong local noted that Saskatchewan clinics with salaried doctors cut medical costs by 17 per cent, drug costs by 21 per cent, and hospitalization costs by 30 per cent.

"Can you imagine what would happen if the firefighters or police officers worked on a fee-for-service basis?" Rowsell said.

HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato pointed out that HEU members are constantly being asked to do more with less, while doctors got a budget increase of \$150 million this year.

Convention passed a resolution calling on the B.C. and federal governments to prohibit physicians from opting out of medicare.

More than 40 B.C. doctors opted out of medicare last year, directly charging patients for their services.

### Gavel to VGH

An HEU convention tradition continued at HEU's 50th birthday when the convention gavel was presented to the Vancouver General local in recognition of that local's five decades of work in HEU.



BIBO

The gavel is presented to the local which epitomizes HEU's traditions of solidarity and militancy, and this year the Provincial Executive decided to recognize the local where HEU was founded in 1944 and nurtured in its formative years.

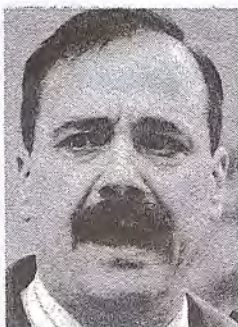
"I'm proud to be part of the local that started it all," local chair Leo Bibb said in accepting the gavel. "We hope to be here, bigger and better than ever, 50 years from now."

### Georgetti greetings

In bringing greetings to convention delegates, B.C. Federation of Labour president Ken Georgetti stressed the need to work together to defeat plans by the Liberal government in Ottawa to gut social programs.

"I think they're following a plan written by a fellow named Mulroney," Georgetti said.

"Instead of creating full employment and a fair tax system, the government is attacking those who can least afford it."



GEORGETTI



**LARGER CONFINES** HEU president Fred Muzin stands before convention delegates assembled in a large tent at the Richmond Inn. A growing union required a move to the larger confines of the tent.

# Building for the future

**H**EU MEMBERS celebrated their 50th anniversary with a series of convention decisions designed to prepare the union to face future challenges.

The week-long 19th biennial convention had to be held in a huge heated tent on the parking lot of the Richmond Inn because recent union growth made the delegation too big to fit in the hotel's largest meeting room.

But delegates settled in to the spacious and airy structure to tackle a series of sweeping proposals — all designed to head for a full membership review before adoption — that will reshape HEU for the 21st century.

Among the first tasks completed was passage of necessary constitutional amendments to implement the membership ratification of the merger with the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Keynote addresses Oct. 24 from CUPE officers Judy Darcy and Geraldine McGuire resulted in standing

ovations that left no doubt about the strength of the new ties between the two unions.

Convention also approved a Provincial Executive proposal to conduct a membership consultation process on both union structure and staffing.

Among the issues to be considered: the structure of locals in relation to health reform and the needs of the membership; the structure of servicing regions; the financial base of locals; the authority and staff resources available to locals; and the recommendations of a recent review of union administration and staffing.

Convention also approved a new special \$100,000 fund to finance local projects and campaigns.

President Fred Muzin was re-elected on the first ballot in a contest which featured challenges from financial secretary Mary LaPlante and Provincial Executive member Blair Thomas. LaPlante was then acclaimed to her post of financial secretary.

The appointment of secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato was ratified by a large margin.

**DECISION TIME** Delegates vote on one of the many resolutions considered at the five-day convention, assisted by television monitors which allowed delegates to clearly see all speakers.





SECRETARY-BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

# HEU has met many challenges of change

**F**IFTY YEARS AGO, the founders of HEU put together a union which has faced up to many challenges and changes that have shaken society and the health care system over five decades.

The key to their success and the success of those who have followed is the ability to deal with change, HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato said in her report to convention.

"The point of looking to the past is to recognize that successful organizations evolve to meet new challenges," Allevato said.

"We cannot expect to stop change. We know some change is necessary. What is important is to work to shape that change so that we protect medicare and protect health care workers."

In a wide-ranging report that went from HEU's



ALLEVATO

programs for cuts while tax breaks for the wealthy cause deficits.

"Our union vigorously opposes the reduction of the deficit through cuts in social services," she said. "We support efforts to make corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes."

In B.C., the NDP government has exceeded the Royal Commission on Health Care and Cost's target for cutting hospital services, 850 patient days per 1,000 population. The provincial average now stands at 805 beds per patient day.

But in spite of these cuts and the government's conflict-of-interest guidelines that shut HEU members out of new governing bodies, B.C. health care

internal review to its relations with unions as far away as Mexico and Australia, Allevato noted that pressure on public health care spending is a worldwide phenomenon.

In Canada, the federal Liberals are carrying on the right-wing policies of Brian Mulroney's Conservative government, which target social

workers are far better off than their sisters and brothers in other provinces and other countries.

Allevato said HEU must prepare for 1996 municipal elections, when seats on community health councils will be at stake, and for the upcoming provincial election.

In contrast to the NDP record, Liberal leader Gordon Campbell has promised to eliminate the Employment Security Agreement, and Reform Party MLAs have been working to undermine the ESA, she said.

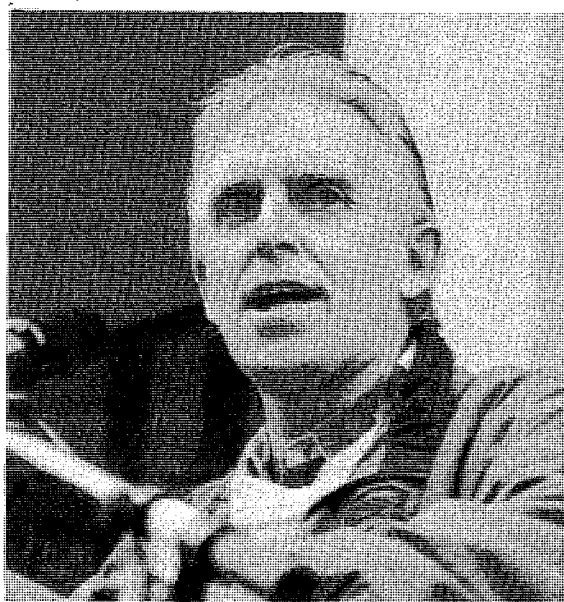
"But HEU members must do more than vote in the next provincial election. The union must develop and support HEU members as candidates."

"Through our association with CUPE, we have a national structure in which to develop joint political and bargaining strategies with health care workers right across the country."

Allevato reported that HEU shop stewards are resolving more and more grievances at step one.

As HEU looks to bargaining in 1996, renewal of the ESA and more progress toward the target rates set under the pay equity process will be high priorities, Allevato said.

In a secret ballot, convention delegates ratified Allevato's appointment as secretary-business manager.



CLC PRESIDENT Bob White at HEU convention.

## White charts course to fight social cutbacks

Canadians have been plunged into a fundamental debate about the shape of our society as a result of the federal government's recent proposals to slash social programs, Canadian Labour Congress president Bob White told the HEU 19th biennial convention.

"It is a fundamental debate about the kind of society we're going to have, and what kind of social safety net we're going to have," White said of the social policy review launched by human resources development minister Lloyd Axworthy.

"The right-wing economists and the business people are saying now that we have to substantively change the social fabric of our country because we are in a deficit situation and we can't afford the social programs we have had in the past."

"This is after a campaign that has created massive devastation all over our economy."

"They're saying that our social programs have failed us. I want to say that the real problem with this country is not that our social programs have failed us."

"What has failed us is the conservative, right-wing fiscal and economic agenda that has put our country in deep trouble. This is much more than a debate about finances. It is a debate about ideology," White said.

HEU delegates echoed White's concern on social policy by passing a resolution which commits HEU to working with other unions and groups in the community to oppose Axworthy's proposals and enhance Canada's social programs.

White said labour can contribute to job creation by taking a hard look at overtime worked by union members and others.

"We can't have people working 50 and 60 hours a week on overtime, and having all kinds of other people who want jobs," he said.

But any effort by unions will require a lot of grassroots work by union activists.

"The number one problem facing this country isn't the debt or the deficit, but jobs for the millions of people who want full-time work."

White said the CLC is working on an action plan which will focus on four areas: the job crisis, health care, social policy, and an alternative federal budget.

The CLC president also praised HEU's role in winning the Employment Security Agreement.

"In light of what was happening around this country, in terms of how governments were treating their public sector workers, in terms of how unions were re-

## Convention charts action on patient-focused care

HEU has been mandated by convention to develop an action plan to help locals deal with patient-focused care, the latest technique used by employers to get more work out of health care workers.

A program of patient-focused care is already under way at Chilliwack General Hospital, where HEU is fighting management's effort to ram through new job descriptions which encompass several existing jobs.

"They call it patient focused care, but I call it a crock," Mary Budge of the Chilliwack local told convention.

Patient care at Chilliwack has actually deteriorated since the multi-skilling plan was brought in. For example, patients in the hospital's extended care unit have been getting baths only every 10 days.

"Why they call it patient-focused care is beyond me," Budge said.

"I love terms like patient-focused care," said Mike Barker of the Vancouver General local. "What the hell do they think we've been doing for years? George Orwell would love this term."

A consultant has claimed that Vancouver Hospital can cut costs by 40 per cent if it uses patient-focused care, Barker said.

Joe Fraser of the Vancouver General local suggested workers will have to wear communicators like characters on Star Trek once patient-focused care is brought in.

The resolution unanimously passed by delegates calls on HEU to investigate patient-focused care, set up an action plan to help locals, and provide resources to locals affected by patient-focused care.

Beverly Kreller of the Hope local said that as a licensed practical nurse, she is concerned about multi-skilled generalists replacing qualified nursing staff.

## Former HEU president Black says union has come full circle

The HEU convention looked to the past and the future when former HEU president William D. (Bill) Black addressed delegates to mark the union's 50th anniversary.

Shortly after it was founded, HEU was known as the Hospital Employees' Federal Union, which Black said gave HEU the right to organize across Canada.

But HEU lost this right in 1950 and later helped form the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which HEU left in 1970, said Black, who served as HEU president from 1968 to 1980.

"I'm happy to know that you've now reaffiliated with CUPE," Black said. "In the past, we contributed greatly to CUPE, and I'm sure we will continue to contribute."

Black recalled that in the early days of HEU, organizers took their families along for trips to the Okanagan, sleeping and working in tents.

"You can imagine what went through my mind when



BLACK

I got here," Black said, surveying the large tent where the convention took place. "Fifty years and we're back where we started."

He said HEU will be set for another 50 years, as long as it continues to be controlled by people who work in hospitals.

Much of his address recalled the work of people who helped build HEU. Alex Paterson, the Vancouver General Hospital paint washer who was HEU's first president and later HEU's first financial secretary, "laid his job on the line to organize the unit that founded HEU in 1944," Black said.

Once the Provincial Executive set aside \$100 for an HEU delegation to entertain delegates at a labour

convention in New Brunswick, Black recalled, and there was \$92 left when the convention ended.

When Paterson was asked to explain whether he had helped entertain the delegates, he replied, "I did. I bought two dozen beer." Added Black, "I think he set the standard for future financial secretaries."

He also saluted William M. Black, who was HEU's first secretary-business manager and was also president of the B.C. Federation of Labour.

"Without Bill's vision, drive and, yes, ego, HEU would not exist as we know it," Black said, also saluting the elder Black's wife, Mary, who worked in the union office. "If Bill was the father of HEU, Mary is the mother."

The former president also saluted other HEU members who helped build the union, including Russ Cole, Cecilia McInnes, Gordon MacPherson, Wally Fedak, John Darby, John Fleming, Jim Ballard, Gwen Parrish, Alberta Dorval, Steve Polak, and Carolyn Chapman.





**SUPPORT GIVEN** Ponderosa local delegate Teresa MacIsaac presents contribution to Angie McWilliams of the Hawthorn local, which was in the midst of a strike for a first contract during convention. Convention delegates contributed \$2,122.75 to the Hawthorn strikers.

## HEU bursary fund benefits from anniversary gift

A 50th anniversary gift from Hospital Employees' Staff Union that will provide two \$500 dollar bursaries for the HEU post-secondary bursary fund was warmly received with a standing ovation from convention delegates.

Marie Allen and Jeanette Price from HESU, which represents the employees of HEU, made the presentation at a special ceremony.

"We can think of no better gift to celebrate the past than to help HEU members and their families prepare for the future," said Allen, a secretary in the Provincial Office. "We're proud of the role that staff have played in helping to build a strong, progressive union that fights for the interests of its members and for a better world for all working people."

**GIFT GIVERS** Jeanette Price, left, and Marie Allen from the Hospital Employees' Staff Union presented an anniversary gift of two \$500 post-secondary bursaries for HEU at the convention.



## Cuba trade boosted

HEU delegates told the U.S. government to stop strangling the Cuban economy in a motion that calls on the U.S. to end "its illegal and immoral" trade embargo of Cuba. The embargo, in place since the 1960s, cuts off any trade between the two countries which are separated by only 140 km of ocean, and places sanctions on companies from other countries which do trade with Havana.

Vancouver General local delegate Mike Barker said the U.S. has done everything in its considerable power to destroy Cuba.

The trade embargo has cut off everything needed by a struggling country, Barker said, like paper, food and industrial goods. But despite tremendous pressure, Barker said the Cuban government was struggling hard to maintain social programs that are the best of any country in Latin America.

Jose Monzon, from the Tilbury local, said the Cuban revolution was a beacon for Latin America. "From people to people, from union to union, I ask you to support this resolution," said Monzon who escaped to Canada from the death squads of his native Guatemala in the 1980s.

On two occasions the United Nations has declared the U.S. embargo to be a violation of international law.

## FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

### Union growth is major challenge

**I**N THE 10 YEARS she has served as HEU financial secretary, Mary LaPlante has seen the size of the union almost double from 21,000 members to 39,000.

In her report to convention, LaPlante said the growth continues strong, with 45 new locals since the 1992 convention for a total number of 276 locals in HEU. But as HEU grows, it continuously faces challenges from employers.

"All of us will have to start right now in preparing for the next round of bargaining in 1996."

"We can't wait until 1996 to start preparing. Employers are telling our members now that, just you wait until 1996, you're gone, toast, history."

During the past two years, HEU has organized in new areas such as home support, day care, mental health and group homes, bargained the Employment Security Agreement, and negotiated a permanent affiliation agreement with the Canadian Union of Public Employees, keeping HEU in the House of Labour.



LAPLANTE

Because of the affiliation costs with CUPE and the fact that HEU now has access to the CUPE national defence fund, which pays strike pay on the tenth day off the job, convention approved a constitutional amendment which maintains union dues at 2.1 per cent of gross pay, but removes the requirement

to put part of those dues into the HEU strike fund.

LaPlante explained that the balance in the HEU strike fund now stands at more than \$8.1 million, which is more than adequate to cover strike pay in the first days of any industry-wide dispute. Interest earned on the strike fund will stay with the fund.

LaPlante stressed the importance of HEU's structural review, which was endorsed by convention. At the time of the convention call, 191 out of 258 locals had fewer than 100 members, accounting for 73 per cent of the locals. One hundred and twenty-three locals or 48 per cent of the total had a membership of less than 50 members.

"This is very expensive, and with the assistance and input from the locals and members, we can improve and perhaps change our structure over the next two years."

## Darcy says unity key in fightbacks

"By learning from each other, HEU and the Canadian Union of Public Employees will be able to bring the benefits of organization to thousands of new workers," CUPE president Judy Darcy told convention delegates Oct. 24.

In her first address to an HEU convention since HEU members ratified affiliation with CUPE, Darcy recalled the many joint projects the two unions had already carried out together, "including bringing together other unions to make medicare a major issue in the federal election."

That kind of unity will be needed again, she warned, to help health workers roll back attacks like those launched by premier Ralph Klein, who has closed four major hospitals and laid off 1,400 workers in Calgary alone.

Ralph Klein's Alberta, where the government is pressing single parents on welfare to take hospital nursing assistant's jobs at \$6 an hour, is the way the federal Liberals want to take the entire country, Darcy said.

"We're saying if you can set clear goals to eliminate the deficit, why not set clear goals to eliminate unemployment? That's what they don't want to hear."

The challenge for all unionists is to rebuild local activism, Darcy said. "Too often, after we get certified, a lot of the shopfloor organizing doesn't continue."

That kind of grassroots commitment will ensure that unions "make a difference in our rights and our children's lives," Darcy said. "HEU and CUPE together will fight to achieve this."



**CUPE PRESIDENT** Judy Darcy lays out challenges for CUPE and HEU after completion of affiliation agreement.

CUPE national secretary-treasurer Geraldine McGuire told delegates she had often doubted the merger would ever take place, but said "what we have accomplished together cannot be taken lightly. The governments of this country will now have a grater force to reckon with as a result of the merger."

"As long as we stand together as trade unionists, not only will we guard the heart of health care but we will guard the heart of the trade union movement in B.C. and across Canada."

**DEFENDING PROGRAMS** HEU convention delegates joined hundreds of other demonstrators in downtown Vancouver for a demonstration against the federal Liberal government's plans to slash funds for unemployment insurance, welfare, and post-secondary education





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## Next 18 months key to 1996 bargaining

**I**N THE YEAR and a half since he took office as HEU president, Fred Muzin said HEU has dealt with the challenges of ratifying and implementing of the Employment Security Agreement, and negotiating HEU's relationship with the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

"The next year and a half will be key in preparing for 1996 bargaining," Muzin said in his report to convention. "We must roll up our sleeves and work at empowering our members at a grass roots level."

Muzin said HEU remains as strong as ever as it celebrates its 50th anniversary.

"Despite the uncertainty and fear associated with health care restructuring, increasing workloads, vio-

lence, high injury rates, patient-focused care, and being forced to deal with employers straight out of Jurassic Park, HEU members remain the heart of health care.

"The difficulties many of our locals are experiencing in achieving quorum at monthly meetings is reflective of the increasing stress levels and competing demands on our members' time."

But Muzin said the union is providing education programs to help shop stewards, occupational health and safety activists, and unionized supervisors deal with these problems.

While having an NDP government has made an important difference for HEU members, the union must always maintain its traditional militancy to ensure HEU members' issues are addressed.

"While it is important that we acknowledge and



MUZIN

appreciate the progressive changes that labour has achieved under the NDP – Labour Code reform that makes organizing easier, improvements to our pensions, better Workers' Compensation coverage, increased minimum wage levels, and \$140 million for pay equity improvements – we must continue to lobby the government about their naive conflict-of-interest guidelines, the out-of-control anti-NDP health care management bureaucracy, the lack of pay equity legislation, and the recent public sector wage control guidelines."

Muzin said HEU must also look at its own structure to be able to better assist its members and take on the challenges posed daily by employers.

HEU must also stay in the forefront of the fight to preserve the rights of workers and those who are under attack by right-wing governments and corporations, Muzin said.

HEU's affiliation with CUPE will help in the fight against the federal Liberal government's efforts to gut social programs and cut funding for medicare, he added.



**REFORM DISCUSSION** Health minister Paul Ramsey talks about health care reforms with HEU convention delegates shortly before his address to convention, in which he promised to limit private health care services.

## HEU, Ramsey address reforms

Concerns about cutbacks to hospital services and lack of input into new community and regional health bodies came to the fore during HEU's 19th biennial convention.

These concerns prompted health minister Paul Ramsey to acknowledge in his address to the convention that more work needs to be done to make the Employment Security Agreement work better, and to make sure community health boards and regional health councils "relate to the people they're going to employ."

Delegates passed a resolution on health care restructuring that calls on the provincial government to freeze all bed closures and displacements of health care workers until community services are in place.

The resolution also calls for the restoration of lost

health services, and commits HEU to work with other unions and community groups to raise the issue of the erosion of health care.

During debate on the resolution, delegates criticized both the NDP government and the opposition Liberals and Reformers for their stands on health care.

"The NDP has bought into a conservative budget philosophy," said G.F. Strong local delegate Sheila Rowsell, who warned that the Liberals and Reformers want to set up a "dog-eat-dog health care system."

"I don't think the government thinks health care has been improperly managed," said Vancouver General local delegate Mike Barker. "I don't think big business thinks that."

Other delegates agreed that local campaigns are an effective way to preserve health services.

Dan Hingley of the Nanaimo local said his local undertook a major campaign to fight cutbacks at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, in spite of attempts by the employer to threaten and intimidate workers.

"The employer's attempt to pit workers against the government didn't work," Hingley said, and the government has given the hospital additional funds.

HEU's campaign to save Shaughnessy Hospital may not have met its main objective, but Blair Thomas, a former member of the Shaughnessy local who is now on the Provincial Executive, told convention he believes the campaign may have saved 14 other hospitals around B.C. which were under consideration for closing.

Also passed was a resolution calling on HEU to campaign to change conflict-of-interest guidelines that permit health care workers to sit on the regional boards and community councils with restrictions that deal with only direct conflicts of interest.

In his address to convention, Ramsey noted that his government put \$50 million into hospitals this summer to prevent damage to health services.

"We do not believe that the deficit should be cut on the backs of those who depend on our health system," the health minister said.

Ramsey said the federal government now pays only 28 per cent of B.C.'s health costs, compared to 50 per cent 15 years ago. "That represents a real cutback of about 900 million health care dollars just for this year."

The minister said he plans legislation next year which will require private for-profit medical services such as private scanning and surgery services to get a licence.

Such private services run counter to the spirit of medicare, and Ramsey said such facilities will be refused licences "where the development of such a facility is obviously incompatible with our publicly funded health system."

## Equity caucuses set up to deal with discrimination

HEU convention delegates voted to establish four equity caucuses within the union representing aboriginals, persons of colour, lesbians and gay men, and persons with challenges.

The resolution, which mandates these caucuses to develop educational programs and "explore the creation of equity positions with our union structure," passed after convention had rejected a constitutional amendment which would have seen these groups formally represented on the Provincial Executive.

"This union must examine itself," HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato said in opening debate on the resolution establishing equity caucuses.

Allevato said discrimination is widespread through-

out our society, which is "built on exploiting people, exploiting workers." The resolution allows HEU to use differences among its members as a force to build the union, not divide the union.

They are in a fight we can't even comprehend because we've never had to face it," Nancy Macdonald of the Royal Jubilee local told convention.

Minnie Dennis of the Penticton local said, "I'm really proud to be a member of HEU. I am here as an aboriginal woman. I am also here as an activist."

Dita Smith of the Canada Way local said she has often been discriminated against, but this discrimination only made her stronger and more determined.

"When you look at me," Aldith Jamison of the

Vancouver General local said, "I hope you see me as a woman who can fulfill the qualifications, not as a black woman."

During the debate on the defeated proposal to create vice-presidents chosen by equity caucuses, Louise Hutchinson of the Children's local spoke about how ignorance breeds discrimination.

"All some people need to know is what a real live lesbian looks like," Hutchinson said. "It's really, really difficult when you're out."

Delegates also passed resolutions committing HEU to fighting homophobia through education, and putting HEU on record as supporting aboriginal people in their quest for self-government on their lands.



# HEU's new Provincial Executive

**T**HE DELEGATES to HEU's 19th biennial convention elected a new team to lead HEU into its second half century. HEU's Provincial Executive, or PE, is a 21-member team with big responsibilities.

While there are several newcomers to the PE, most members are returning from the last Provincial Executive, which oversaw the negotiation and implementation of the Employment Security Agreement and dealt with the many challenges of health care restructuring.

The new PE will guide HEU's own restructuring process, deal with issues arising from the provincial government's New Directions in Health Care, and get the union ready to bargain a new contract in 1996.

These are the people who are guiding HEU today and in the coming months, starting with the three full-time officers.

## PRESIDENT

**Fred Muzin** is HEU president, and one of the union's three full-time officers.

A biomedical electronics technologist from St. Paul's Hospital, Muzin was first elected to the PE in 1986, serving as 3rd vice-president until he was elected 1st vice-president in 1990.

He became president in 1993 upon the resignation of Bill Macdonald from that position, and was elected in his own right in 1994.

He has served on provincial bargaining committees since 1986.

As president, Muzin is responsible for communications with HEU's 39,000 members and 276-plus locals. He also sits on all PE working committees.

Muzin served on his local's executive starting in 1982, and was chairperson for seven years.

He was a long-time delegate to the Vancouver and District Labour Council, and sat on its executive. Muzin is also active in his local NDP riding association.

His interests include baseball, racquetball, weightlifting, jazz, stamp collecting and travel. He is married.

## SECRETARY-BUSINESS MANAGER

**Carmela Allevato** has been HEU's chief administrative officer and spokesperson since her appointment by the PE in 1989. Her appointment is ratified by secret ballot at convention.

Allevato joined HEU as in-house legal counsel in 1985. She was appointed by the PE as assistant to the officers in 1988 and then as assistant secretary-business manager in 1989.

Prior to coming to HEU, Allevato was an elected trustee on the Vancouver School Board, serving for two terms in 1984 and 1986. She was one of the trustees fired by the Socred government in the mid-1980's for refusing to implement a cutbacks budget.



**Fred Muzin**  
President



**Carmela Allevato**  
Secretary-Business Manager



**Mary LaPlante**  
Financial Secretary

## FINANCIAL SECRETARY

**Mary LaPlante** is beginning her second decade of responsibility for HEU's financial affairs. She was first elected financial secretary in 1984.

LaPlante became an HEU member at Prince Rupert Regional Hospital in 1973.

In 1980, she participated in a successful organizing drive to win union protection for hospital clerical employees. She was chair of her local from 1981 to 1984, and was elected to the PE as regional vice-president for the North in 1982.

Like Muzin and Allevato, LaPlante serves on all PE working committees.

She's a member of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. She has also been active in her NDP provincial riding association and the strata council at her Richmond town-house complex.

## VICE-PRESIDENTS

HEU's five vice-presidents play important roles in the day-to-day affairs of the union, and serve on key PE committees.

Victoria Royal Jubilee biomedical technician **David Ridley** is now 1st vice-president. Ridley was 4th vice-president after being elected in 1992.

Ridley has held many positions in his

local, is a delegate to the Victoria Labour Council, and is active in the Victoria-Beacon Hill NDP constituency association.

His hobbies include coin collecting, fishing for trout, and developing computer programs.

Burnaby Hospital stores worker **Maurice Smith** is 2nd vice-president. Smith was first elected to the PE in 1978.

He has served as financial secretary, member-at-large, and 3rd, 4th and 5th vice-presidents.

Chairperson of his local for a total of 18 years, Smith has also served as vice-chairperson, trustee, and warden.

Smith represents HEU at the Action Canada Network,

a coalition of unions and community groups fighting against free trade and attacks on social programs.

Kimberley Special Care Home care aide **Ruby Hardwick** is now 3rd vice-president.

First elected to the PE in 1986, Hardwick has served in several other HEU executive positions, including 1st vice-president.

In her local she served from 1980 to 1992 as trustee, secretary-treasurer, chairperson, vice-chairperson, and shop steward.

A grandmother, Hardwick enjoys spending time with her family. She also loves knitting and crafts.

**Tom Knowles** is 4th vice-president.



**David Ridley**  
1st VP



**Maurice Smith**  
2nd VP



**Ruby Hardwick**  
3rd VP

The St. Paul's precision instrument technician was elected to the 1988 to 1990 bargaining committee. First elected to the PE as trustee in 1990, Knowles has also served as 2nd and 3rd vice-president.

He's served in a number of local executive positions since 1977, and is currently secretary-treasurer.

Knowles is also a union counsellor.

In his spare time, he is umpire-in-chief for the South Vancouver Little League, and enjoys curling and golf.

**Colleen Fitzpatrick** became 5th vice-president in 1994.

The Prince Rupert Regional Hospital accounting clerk was first elected to the PE as regional vice-president for the North in 1986, and has served as senior trustee and senior trustee elect.

Fitzpatrick also served on the 1988 to 1990 bargaining committee.

Locally, she's served as chairperson, warden, shop steward, chief shop steward, and vice-chair.

A delegate to the Prince Rupert Labour Council, Fitzpatrick has also served on a local school board advisory committee.

She is a grandmother and enjoys swimming, reading and cross stitch embroidery.



**Tom Knowles**  
4th VP



**Colleen Fitzpatrick**  
5th VP



# Twenty-one members of PE prepare for HEU restructuring and 1996 bargaining

## TRUSTEES

Trustees work with the financial secretary to oversee the union's financial affairs, and oversee union property and assets.

**Melanie Iverson** became senior trustee in 1994 after serving two years as senior trustee elect.

An admitting clerk at Salt Spring Island's Lady Minto Hospital, Iverson was elected PE alternate in 1986, regional vice-president for Vancouver Island in 1988, then first member-at-large at the 1990 convention.

She began serving in her local executive in 1983, when Lady Minto workers joined HEU.

Iverson represented HEU on the health ministry advisory committee on health care restructuring set up after the B.C. Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs reported in 1991.

She is a labour council delegate and past president of Salt Spring's NDP club. She golfs in her spare time.

Senior trustee elect **Della McLeod** is a long-term care aide at Willowhaven in Nelson.

First elected to the PE in 1990 as regional vice-president for the Kootenays, she served on the provincial bargaining committee in 1989 and 1990.

McLeod is also a labour representative on Unemployment Insurance appeal boards.

She has held local offices since 1984.

Active in the NDP and a committed environmentalist, McLeod works with many community groups including a local hospice, and a theatre company.

**Aldith Jamison**, a technician in the sterile supply department at Vancouver General, was elected trustee, her first post on the PE, at the 1994 convention.

After serving her local in a number of capacities, she was elected to her local executive as trustee in 1991 and currently is assistant secretary-treasurer.

Jamison is involved in her community doing work with children, and in a local support group for women of colour.



**Melanie Iverson**  
Senior Trustee



**Della McLeod**  
Senior Trustee  
Elect



**Aldith Jamison**  
Trustee

## MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

The two member-at-large positions were added to the PE in 1980 to provide a measure of stability to what was then a much smaller executive.

**Blair Thomas**, first member-at-large, joined the PE in 1992 as a regional vice-president.

A stores attendant at Children's Hospital since he moved following the closure of Shaughnessy Hospital, Thomas has held elected positions at Grace and Shaughnessy locals since 1982.

He played a key role in the Save Our Shaughnessy campaign in 1993.

**Minnie Dennis**, a first-time delegate to the 1994 convention, was elected second member-at-large.

An LPN working as an activity aide at Penticton Regional Hospital, Dennis is secretary-treasurer of her local.

She is active in a wide variety of organizations in her community, including working with other Native women, and in her local women's centre and labour council.

Dennis, a Gitksan Wet'suwet'en, is the first aboriginal person to serve on the PE.

She is the mother of four children, three of whom are grown up.



**Kathie Anderson**  
Regional VP  
Lower Mainland  
Coastal

## REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

Regional vice-presidents are elected to bring front-line knowledge of the concerns and needs of members from their areas to the PE, but serve members as a whole.

**Kate Marleau**, regional vice-president for the Fraser Valley, joined the PE at the 1994 convention.

Marleau is a laundry worker and house-keeping aide who is chair of her local at Mission.

Before joining her local executive, Marleau was active as a shop steward and on local committees.

The regional vice-president for the Kootenays is Rossland Mater Misericordiae cook **Merilyn McKerracher**, who was elected to the PE for the first time at the 1992 convention.

McKerracher has been chairperson, trustee and secretary for her local.

McKerracher volunteers at a transition house in Trail.

North Vancouver Lions Gate Hospital LPN **Kathie Anderson** is the vice-president for the Lower Mainland Coastal region. She was elected to the PE in 1992 for the first time.

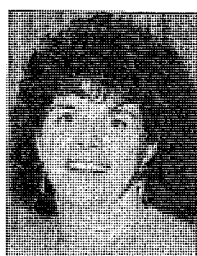
She has been active in her local since 1967, serving in many executive positions.

**Julia Amendt**, regional vice-president for the Lower Mainland Centennial region, returns to the PE after serving 10 years there from 1982 to 1992.

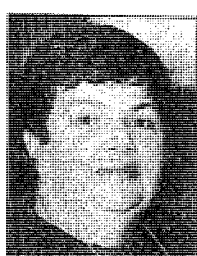
Amendt, a clerk at Surrey Memorial Hospital now on long-term disability, was Lower Mainland regional vice-president, senior trustee elect and senior trustee.

Amendt has been active in her local executive, serving in a number of positions since 1976, and is active in the Langley NDP. She has also run twice for her school board.

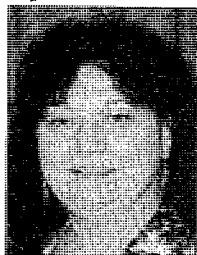
Children's Hospital electrician **Mike Borason** is regional vice-president for



**Kate Marleau**  
Regional VP  
Fraser Valley



**Merilyn McKerracher**  
Regional VP  
Kootenays



**Julia Amendt**  
Regional VP  
Lower Mainland  
Centennial



**Mike Borason**  
Regional VP  
Lower Mainland  
Central



**Blair Thomas**  
1st Member-  
at-Large



**Minnie Dennis**  
2nd Member-  
at-Large

the Lower Mainland Central region. Borason is chairperson of his local at Children's, where he came after several years at Shaughnessy Hospital. He served on the Shaughnessy executive and was active in the Save Our Shaughnessy campaign.

**Mary Pat Wiley** represents the North region. The Prince George Regional Hospital pharmacy department purchasing clerk was first elected to the PE in 1992.

Wiley has served her local as chairperson and secretary-treasurer. She's on the executive of the Prince George Labour Council, and was active in the fight against bed closures and layoffs at her hospital.

The new regional vice-president for the Okanagan is **Kathy Dunn**, a patient porter at Vernon Jubilee Hospital.

Now chairperson of the Vernon local, Dunn has also served as secretary-treasurer and on local committees. She's also active in her local labour council.

Cumberland dietary aide **Linda Hargreaves** represents Vancouver Island on the PE. Hargreaves, who has served as vice-chairperson and chief shop steward of her Cumberland local, has also been active in the Campbell River Courtenay and District Labour Council.

Hargreaves is also a village councillor, a Vancouver Island regional library trustee, vice-chair of Cumberland's recreation commission, a director of the local transition house, and active in local arts, historical and conservation societies.

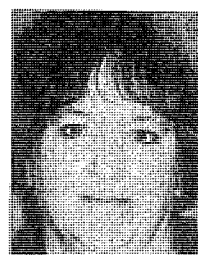
## ALTERNATES

In case a member of the PE has to leave office, eight members have been elected as alternates to fill vacant spots. Regional vice-presidents have two alternates.

**Richard Dennis** of the Yaletown local in Vancouver is first alternate. **Barb Burke** of the Penticton local is the second alternate, **Don Allen** of the Burnaby local is third, **Louise Hutchinson** of the Children's local is fourth, **Nancy Lang** of the Prince George local is fifth, **Mary Budge** of the Chilliwack local is sixth, **Darlene Bown** of the Royal Jubilee local is seventh, and **Susan Bjerknes** of the Kimberley Special Care local is eighth.



**Mary Pat Wiley**  
Regional VP  
North



**Kathy Dunn**  
Regional VP  
Okanagan



**Linda Hargreaves**  
Regional VP  
Vancouver Island



**JAN. 10/11**

Provincial Executive meetings.

**JAN. 12/13**

Tri-union workshop.

**JAN. 18 - 20**

Provincial Executive meetings.

**JAN. 21/22**

NDP federal renewal conference.

**JAN. 22 - FEB. 17**

Canadian Labour Congress winter school.

**JAN. 25**

Student strike protesting federal cuts to post-secondary education.

**FEB. 15 - 17**

Provincial Executive meetings.

**MARCH 8**

International Women's Day

**MAR. 15 - 17**

Provincial Executive meetings.

**MAR. 31 - APR. 2**

B.C. NDP convention.

**APRIL 26 - 28**

Provincial Executive meetings.

**APRIL 28**

Day of mourning for workers killed, injured on the job.

**MAY 1**

May Day, international workers' day.

**MAY 31 - June 2**

Provincial Executive meetings.

## A Picture of Health shows Ontario health workers confronting cutbacks

by Geoff Meggs

The sweeping cuts imposed on Ontario's health care system by the Rae government's social contract has had a traumatic effect on quality care and on health workers.

Now a new video called *A Picture of Health*, released by the Ontario Federation of Labour, documents those impacts, the concerns of health workers and how they propose to fight back.

Unlike B.C. workers, who had endured years of Social Credit cuts and were highly organized in three main unions, Ontario health workers faced few large reductions and were organized into different unions or had no union at all.

Health employers were a different story. The Ontario Hospital Association was acknowledged as a virtually autonomous political force, able and willing to defy government.

No defiance was necessary in the case of the Rae government. The social contract gave employers all they needed to make the cuts at workers' expense and thousands of workers lost their jobs.

For those who remained in the understaffed and underfunded facilities, the crisis has been almost as desperate. Quality care has gone out the window.

Ontario's health unions quickly united under the leadership of the OFL to create a health research project which, believe it or not, the health ministry helped to fund.

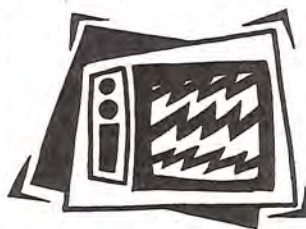
Working with local labour councils around the province, the OFL helped organize community forums where union members and community activists in the health care field were able to link up and plan resistance.

*A Picture of Health* reports from those forums. It shows the long-term care workers, despondent at the low quality care they are forced to give their residents. It shows the hospital workers, fighting to keep up standards.

And it reflects the growing conviction of Ontario health workers that "organized medicine" - doctors, the drug companies, hospital bosses - must be

confronted if Medicare is to be defended. Copies of *A Picture of Health* may be ordered from the OFL Health Research Project, 15 Gervais Drive, Suite 202, Don Mills, Ont., M3C 1Y8 for \$21.40. A copy is available from the HEU Communications Department, Provincial Office.

At 25 minutes in length, it is an ideal discussion starter for local meetings or community gatherings.



### VIDEO

## A Picture of Health



The crisis in Ontario's health care system has produced a commitment to united action among Ontario's health unions, something they must have to move forward.

Their "vision of health" includes the Canada Health Coalition principles adopted by HEU, but also spells out how the unions intend to relate to each other.

The key points include:

- a pledge to "fight together for the right to care and the right to make democratic decisions on health care in Ontario;"
- a demand for an Employment Security Agreement for health workers;
- a pledge to "fight organized medicine," including the fee-for-service system and the privatization of health.

Copies of the entire *Labour Vision* are available from Provincial Office.

## HEU LESBIANS AND GAYS

### for support

- afraid of being identified?
- feeling isolated?
- being harassed?
- want to know your rights?

### for information about

- same sex benefits
- fighting harassment
- combatting homophobia
- fighting discrimination

### CALL!

**739-1514 (Lower Mainland)**  
**1-800-663-5813, local 514**

*Confidential Service of HEU  
Lesbian and Gay Issues Group*



## Coffee break



All stories guaranteed factual.  
Sources this issue: Private Eye,  
CALM, Gulf Islands Driftwood.

### Tips for dealing with stressors at work

Work overload - learn to say "NO" when you are overburdened. It's better doing one job well than doing 10 jobs poorly.

Job confusion - don't hesitate to ask for clarification. You need to know what is expected of you in order to perform to these expectations.

Job conflict - speak with the person with whom you have a problem. Enroll in courses in conflict resolution skills.

Inadequate job preparation - ask for additional training if needed. Enroll in workshops offered at work or courses conducted at local schools.

Relationships at work - use good conflict resolution skills. Speak in "I" statements, that is describe either the situation or your feelings rather than putting the other person on

the defensive by referring to his or her behaviour.

Organizational structure and climate - speak with supervisors or co-workers about your desire to be involved in the decisions relative to your work. Express your concern regarding any lack of consultation you perceive.

Work environment - open windows, change light bulbs, hang posters, keep pictures of loved ones in your work area.

Take a break - go for a walk or put your feet up and relax.

Take a moment for yourself!

### We've heard this before

A doctor who lives in San Cristobal de las Casas in the Chiapas region of Mexico told the Christian Science Monitor, "These Indians aren't dying of hunger, they just don't want to work. We don't hate the Indians. We treat them like our

own, we bring them into our houses. I have four working for me right now."

### Collapse of health care continues

True stories from the restructuring of British health care:

- penny-pinching administrators have charged a woman for providing copies of the medical notes prepared about her baby son's sudden death;
- the number of administrators in the Welsh hospital system has increased 6.5 per cent since January;
- one hospital is using charitable donations to invest in such health-producing companies as the Tate and Lyle food giant and the Cadbury Schweppes candy and booze empire;
- surgeons at cash-strapped Watford Hospital eliminated the surgical waiting list by refusing patients if it was felt "they

would have to wait an unacceptably long time for surgery."

### Paint the Gulf Islands red

While communist regimes are in retreat almost everywhere, students at Gulf Islands Secondary School have decided to buck the trend by electing a six-member student council with three members coming from the newly formed Gulf Islands Communist Party.

Council president and party supporter Brett Gaylor admits the name has a "bit of a stigma," but interest grew so fast that it became too troublesome to look at alternate names such as the Socialist Party or Consensus Party.

While Marx and Engels didn't figure in the party's literature, the party is pledged to equality for all and working together to build a better environment.



# HEU people



REIMER

## Lois Reimer built local at Lions Gate

Lois Reimer, a longtime HEU activist at Lions Gate Hospital in North Vancouver, passed away on Oct. 15, 1994.

Reimer took early retirement in 1990 after working for 25 years at Lions Gate in a variety of clerical positions, most recently as the laundry department clerk.

While Reimer served a term as chairperson of her local, she is best known for her many years of service as the local's secretary-treasurer, where she was noted for her frugality and strict accounting.

She was a key organizer for the local during its first full scale strike, when Lions Gate joined other HEU locals in 1976 in walkouts against their employers.

The strike began at two in the afternoon with little advance warning, and by eight that evening, Reimer had a strike headquarters staffed

and set up, complete with phones.

Reimer was a mentor for a whole generation of HEU activists. Just one of her organizing efforts was a meeting held at her home in 1969 which led to clerical staff winning the right to wear pantsuits to work.

Along with her husband Henry, a B.C. rail conductor who survives her, she was a strong supporter of the NDP on the North Shore.

Reimer is also survived by three sisters, a brother, other relatives, and many friends both inside and outside of the Lions Gate local.

## Former chair Lewis retires from Cedarview

Carol Lewis is retiring from her job as a care aide at Cedarview Lodge in North Vancouver after 12 years which saw her help build the HEU local at that facility.

After HEU was certified at Cedarview in 1986, Lewis served in many local union committees and served two years each as chairperson and vice-chairperson of her local.

Lewis is moving with her husband to the Shuswap Lake area where they will be building a house and opening a bed-and-breakfast facility which is due to open next summer.

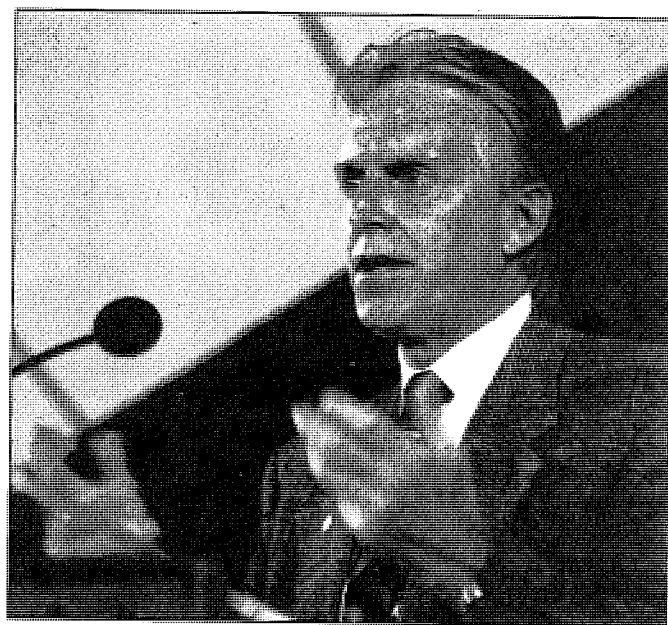
## Velma Kivi retires at Simon Fraser Lodge

Velma Kivi is retiring after working as a cook at Simon Fraser Lodge in Prince George.

Kivi, who worked at the lodge for 20 years before retiring, is looking forward to travelling and cross country skiing in the winter.

ON VIDEO FROM HEU

## Defending Canada's social programs:



Jean Chrétien's plan to cut social programs begs a basic question: What kind of society Canadians are going to have for the next generation?

Canadian labour congress president Bob White makes the case that creating decent jobs for the unemployed is the best prescription for dealing with the deficit, not cuts to social programs.

In this 36-minute video from his speech at October's HEU convention, White assails the high interest rate and high unemployment policies of Tory and Liberal governments that have caused widespread distress. He outlines labour's alternatives because the status quo has to change to better serve working people.

# JOBS, NOT CUTS!

# HEU video club

Call 734-3431 and ask for Gail Paquette, HEU Communications department, to order a copy on loan

## PUZZLE

What's the guy in the suit got that the others don't have? Yes, a bad attitude and a briefcase. But something more important. The scrambled words below spell out four ways bosses deny it to workers. The circled letters, once unscrambled, will spell out the second word of the solution. If that doesn't tell you the first word, well, you've got more serious problems.



Z E D I W O N S

Z E P I R A T I V

Y O F A F L

T R U T N O O A C C

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

## You can

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

by notifying us promptly of any change of address.

Just clip this coupon, which has your mailing label on the back, fill in your new address below and mail to *The Guardian*, 2006 West 10th Ave., Vancouver V6J 4P5.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

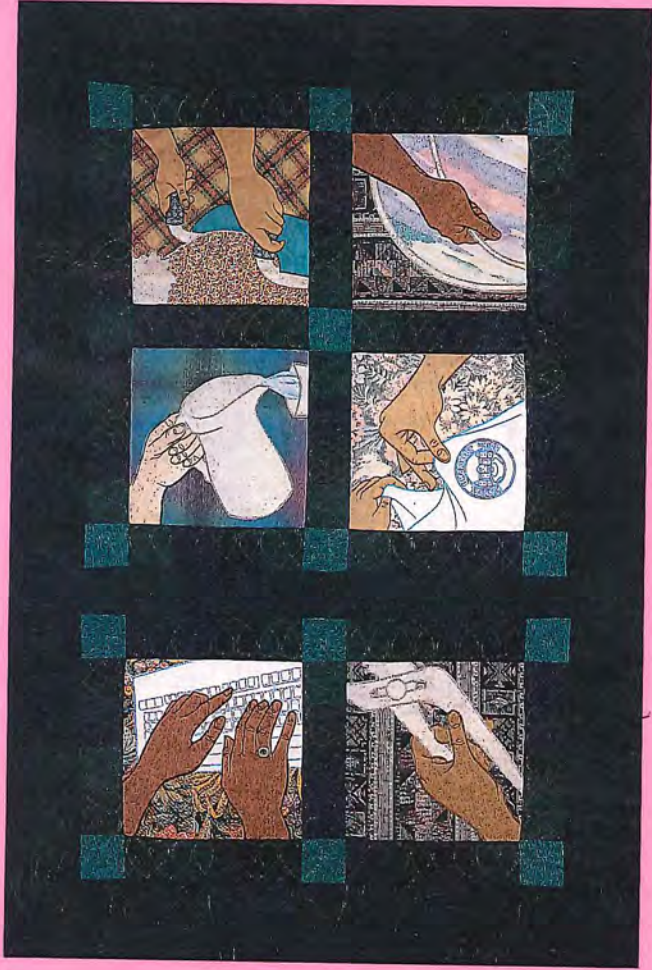
Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Facility \_\_\_\_\_





## The Heart of Health Care



This quilt was specially created by artist Wendy Lewington-Coulter for the cover of *The Heart of Health Care*, HEU's new book about the union's first 50 years. The book is available by mail or in person from the HEU Provincial Office in Vancouver for \$10 a copy. The quilt is now on display in the HEU Provincial Office



### First contracts reached

HEU is settling many longstanding first contract battles, including Courtyard Gardens. Picket lines at Hawthorn Park came down when the dispute moved to arbitration.

PAGE 3



### Standing for union rights

Building trades workers have enlisted the support of the B.C. labour movement in their fight against a betrayal by corporate giant Macmillan Bloedel that could cost them their jobs.

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### Preparing for tomorrow

HEU's 19th biennial convention looked back with pride over HEU's first 50 years and set in motion changes to prepare the union for its second half century.

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### Provincial Executive

Meet the people elected at convention who will guide HEU through its own restructuring process over the months to come.

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