Stan Henderson (second from right) with his primary caregivers (left to right) Bob Sarti, Mags Sigurgeirson and LPH Kathleen Cipparone. Henderson is likely the most acute Alzheimer patient still at home in Vancouver and his experience has much to teach us about the future of care for the elderly.

HEU 13th WAGE POLICY CONFERENCE

Bargaining demands committee members Lorna Partridge and Wendy Johnston.

Ready to bargain
Close to 400 delegates attended HEU's October Wage Policy Conference.

89-year-old Stan Henderson wakes up each morning in the sparsely-furnished bedroom of his East Vancouver home, he's never sure where he is. One day last month, he was reluctant to walk down the hall to the television room because “I'll get completely lost in there.” Some days, it seems better just to stay in bed and sing along to Lawrence Welk, something he couldn't do in some long-term care facilities.

The first face Henderson sees in his bedroom doorway is that of Kathleen Cipparone, a licensed practical nurse who has cared for him for the past two years. He'll give her a cheery “good morning,” but he doesn't address her by name, because he can never remember that either. If he wants to stay in bed, she lets him.

continued on page 7

by GEOFF MEGGS
KATE WILLIAMS PHOTOS
How small changes that involved membership helped HEU move ahead

By Carmela Allevato

A S YOU KNOW I am stepping down as Secretary Business Manager of HEU to return to a career in labour law. I intend to continue to represent working people and unions, but in a different role.

It's hard to believe that it's been six years since I became Secretary Business Manager. During those years I have had the immense pleasure of getting to know many of you and to work side by side with you to win justice and fairness for health care workers and to expand health care in British Columbia. Together we have made a difference.

During the past six years our union has passed many significant milestones: the Employment Security Agreement, the return to CUPE, pay equity breakthroughs, our strike of 1992.

I want to talk about some of the less high-profile things that have changed our union dramatically.

Among the most important and long-lasting changes in our union is the 1990 decision to adopt a new membership education philosophy.

We moved away from teaching what is in the contract to teaching how to go about getting the employer to live up to the contract. Our education programs are second to none and HEU activists are getting results.

Another fundamental change has been the involvement of HEU members and activists in speaking out in the media and at public events on health care issues. It was a most wonderful thing in the 1992 round of bargaining to have literally hundreds of union members speaking out for HEU in every community throughout this province, all of them fully conversant with issues like pay equity and workload and what these meant in their facilities, in their community and in their families.

Putting the face and the voice of the membership up front in all of our struggles is best exemplified by the launching of the current format of the Guardian in 1990, now recognized as the best labour publication in Canada. In 1991, we decided to mail it to each and every member, thus reaching out to our members and their families outside of the workplace and into their homes.

The heartening of our organizing policy in 1991 made it possible for thousands of new health care workers to join HEU. In fact, since 1991 the union has grown by 9,000 members.

The recent establishment of our equity courses and the union's decision to provide staff and funding to the equity courses lead to a further strengthening of our union through our diversity.

My decision to step down was made in the full confidence that the union is in good hands and that everything is in place for a continuation of the progressive direction that we have followed since our founding, and for the effective administration of the union through a strong Provincial Executive and a capable and dedicated staff.

I cannot conclude this last column without mentioning about the. It's exciting moments for me personally as your Secretary Business Manager.

I recall feeling inspired by the sight of 10,000 HEU members with their blue jackets and blue balloons marching to B.C. Place for a rally to support our bargaining to 1992 and knowing them and them that we would be successful through our determination.

I recall starting the final words that concluded the Employment Security Agreement negotiations.

"I remember walking my first HEU picket line with my four-year-old daughter who even today has a special memory of Vancouver Lodge.

"And I remember the phone call from then president Bill MacDonald on December 10, 1989, to tell me he had been appointed by the Provincial Executive to the position of SEIU.

Today, as I leave HEU I am grateful that I had the opportunity to make a difference in the history of the union and in the lives of our members.

I want you to know that I could not have done any of the things I have been able to do for you without the co-operation, the support and the love of many people that work with me every single day. There is a fantastic team of staff and PE members that give their all to HEU and that make every task easy and every problem surmountable. I will miss working with them, and I will miss you.

Guardian

"It's hard to believe it all those years not to be here."

Geoff Magee

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Broadening horizons.

The Guardian is published by the Vancouver's Provincial Executive of the Hospital Employees Union, under the direction of the following officers:

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Vancouver Hospital 2010: a contracting out horror

The patient arrives at Admitting, but it's been contracted out to a company in Bellingham. They're barely able to follow instructions on how to access the phone and modem, but the offficial company is down.

Too tired to wait for the contracted out patient escort person to arrive, they walk to the ward. Fager for their last meal before the operation, they're told the truck delivering the TV dinner from Hope has a flat tire.

Awakening from the operation in great pain, they're unable to summon the nurse. She is cleaning floors and painting walls down the hall. Eventually, they're told the pharmacy has been contracted out and the next shipment of painkillers arrives tomorrow.

A computer screen flashes get-g reet well wishes from friends and relatives. "Writing" has been contracted out to a call centre company looks after this now.

Happy to be going home, the patients try to collect their valuables from the callcentre, but Accounting has been contracted out also. They must either drive to Chilliwack or wait for mail service, it's the year 2010. The heart of health care has been contracted out.

Guardian is authoritative and classy.

Thank you all for your tremendous labours in producing the Guardian. Don't let yourself underestimate how valuable our labours are in producing one of the best papers in Canada, if not north America.

It is imperative that we continue to work towards a cleaner WRITE the mainstream media. You are doing this in a way that is both informative and entertaining. The choice of subject matter is current and relevant. Articles are written clearly and to the point.

This week's cover is attractive and colourful. The Guardian just begs to be picked up and read. And it is precisely why it is read, because it looks good and has an air of authority and class without being pretentious.

Please do not cheap out on design or presentation of this paper. You must realize the tremendous value of this paper in countering the lies of the right wing corporate agenda. And the paper is only good it is read. The Guardian is read because you've made it attractive and Debbie to read. I'm proud of this paper. I've handed copies of it to my CEO of B.C. Women's Hospital, and many others. The Guardian is valuable and colourful, don't change this!

You'll probably never fully realise how your efforts and labours are changing the course of history. Because until we counter and reform our newscasters and mass from the daily lies and deceit they are being fed, we will suffer the consequences down the road. Keep up the great work you are doing.

JOHN MCKENZIE, B.C. Women's Local

Unwise consumers feed bank profits

For July/August article concerning huge profits by banks.

On the one hand, it can be argued that it is the consumer that is making the banks rich. Even if time a debt card is used for a purchase, a charge by the bank is levied. This is reasonable. If at five transactions a day averaged over a week, that adds up. Compound that by thousands across the country. wit-out credit card statements, there are more charges by banks.

For the convenience of not using cash, we are making the banks richer. Before we "talked" banks and charged them with huge profits, let us first look and recognize our own finances to afford all the service charges.

JAMES LITWIN, Surrey Local
What we're up to

Revelstoke home care workers finally win contract improvements

Home care workers at Queen Victoria Hospital in Revelstoke finish big wage increase after a year-long struggle for a contract which the employer appealed every step of the way.

The year-long, retroactive to January 1994, will provide the 20 home care staff pay raises of $33 per cent over the life of the contract, which ends in March 1996. Although employees will earn $1.60 an hour by April 1997, there are no benefits included and the union is still fighting for back pay compensation from 1992. "We're getting our wages and guaranteed work hours," says home support worker Wanda Jarvis. "I think it's going to work out okay once the system gets going."

Working TV gets honourable mention

Vancouver's Working TV, sponsored by HEU and a range of other unions, was shortlisted in two categories for the 1995 Inside Track Video Awards, an international video festival celebrating contributions to community television.

This year's awards, presented in Idaho, were chosen from 1,751 entries. Working TV was honoured for a compilation video in the magazine category, and for another production in the ethnic and cultural category.

Crescendo local leaders are taking political action. They raised their concerns about New Directions and employment security with NDP MLA Cora Evans at a recent meeting. Pictured from left are Donna Anderson, Hazel O'Reourke, MLA Evans, Ruby Rose and Edie Brownaway.

Welcome to more new locals

HEU's organizing department continues to make gains in more workers choose HEU to gain the benefits and respect of a union contract.

Three new locals have joined HEU since our last issue: Wedgewood Manor, a government funded, for-profit Qualicum Beach long-term care facility that provides some special needs care; Foyer Hôtelier, a funded non-profit long-term care supported independent living facility in Maltakville (Comox Valley); and Rideau Manor, a 146-unit apartment and independent living facility in Burnaby that provides some long-term care.

Welcome to all our new members. Do you have an organizing tip? Then phone HEU's 24-hour organizing hotline toll free at 1-800-663-5813, local 215, or e-mail to organize@heu.org.

Carmela Allevato steps down as HEU secretary-business manager

Carmela Allevato, secretary-business manager of the Hospital Employees' Union, advised the union's Provincial Executive Nov 23 of her decision to step down to pursue a new career in labour law.

"Our executive accepted her decision with surprise and regret," said union president Fred Martin. "She leaves a very proud group of achievements since she was first appointed to the post in late 1980. Under Carmela's leadership, the union recovered from a disastrous settlement in the summer of 1989 and rebuilt from the ground up. In the subsequent round of negotiations, we were able to achieve a pay equity settlement that was far ahead of what employers wanted to give.

"The next year, we were able to achieve the Employment Security Agreement, which protected our membership from bargaining unit layoffs during health care restructuring. During the same period, she led our successful negotiations to merge with the Canadian Union of Public Employees so we came back into the House of Labour. We are all very, very sorry to see her go."

Allevato said her decision was a career decision made for personal reasons. "It's been an honour to work for HEU," she said. "It's the right decision for me, and I'm comfortable in the knowledge that the union has strong leadership, both in the executive, the locals and the staff, to carry on from here.

Martin said the executive intended to move quickly to determine a process for selecting a successor. Under the HEU Constitution, the secretary-business manager is a full-time officer of the union appointed by the executive. The appointment is subject to ratification at the union's biennial convention.

Massive support for Bill 48 stand

Thousands of HEU members across the province donated "We Shall Not Be Moved" leaflet stickers Nov 28 to show their determination to stay with their union. The stickers were the latest stage of a union-wide information program that culminated in the Labour Relations Board's three days of hearings to determine who should be considered a "paramedical professional."

A wide range of submissions from other organizations, including groups of work- ers seeking to be considered "paramedical professionals," raised the possibility the definition could be widened, something not contemplated by the lengthy review process that led up to recent changes in the bargaining structure.

Since HEU has so far been denied the right to represent paramedical profes- sionals under Bill 46 changes to health bargaining, any widening of the definition could see thousands of work- ers forced out of the union.

It was those members and many others — up to 15,000 in all — who signed petitions during the campaign calling on the board to admit HEU to the para- medical unit so that it could represent its members regardless of the definition. "Our campaign through the membership and the House of Labour proved effective," said union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato. "The petitions are hard evidence to the board that our members, especially in categories that could be affected by a new definition, feel a very strong commitment to HEU."

"It was important that the effective work done both by our national union leadership in CUPE and through the B.C. Federation of Labour to assist in finding a mediated resolution."

Ramsey pledges action to end interest conflicts

by Stephen Howard

Health minister Paul Ramsey says he's concerned about interest revelations uncovered by HEU involving top officials of the Vancouver Regional Health Board, and has pledged to take "all steps" to safeguard against it.

"I think the allegations the HEU has uncovered are serious," says Ramsey, about the Guardian's recent exposé of board vice-chair Robyn Woodward and chief financial officer Del Brooks. At the same time he worked for the VRIH, Brooks was also a shareholder in a company selling medical equipment. Under the HEU Constitution, the secretary-business manager is a full-time officer of the union appointed by the executive. The appointment is subject to ratification at the union's biennial convention.

It's very important to me that both members of community health councils and regional boards and their employees be free from conflict of interest as they make health governance and administrative decisions," Ramsey said.

"I'm going to be taking all steps to make sure that's the case. And I expect and I think that guarantee that costs associated with health services are delivered to the Vancouver region."

But Ramsey stopped short of outlining a comprehensive conflict of interest policy that would prevent financial backers and proponents of for-profit health care from occupying senior management positions.

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WATCHING THE MEDIA

by Daniel Gawthrop

Shari Graydon still remembers the Grade 10 assignment that awakened her to the overwhelming influence of sexist stereotypes: while the boys in her class got to do a wood carving, the girls had to make an angel out of acrylic ball and spangles. “It was a real no-brainer,” recalls Graydon, adding that she went ahead and did a wood carving anyway. “Not only would the art teacher not mark it, she wouldn’t even look at it.”

The experience was an early catalyst for her later career as a media analyst. When she was working on her masters degree in communications at Simon Fraser University. the 37-year-old writer and weekly Vancouver Sun columnist does presentations for MediaWatch, a national grassroots volunteer feminist organization founded in 1981 to eliminate sexism in the media.

Graydon, now president of MediaWatch, has addressed universities, colleges and high schools, rotary clubs and public art galleries. Recently she produced a series on women and the media for the Women’s Television Network. “DoubleTake,” a 13-part series beginning in January on WTN, will examine the media’s treatment of women in politics, news, and sports, and media related to children.

But it is through her column in the Vancouver Sun that most Guardian readers will know her. Graydon’s relationship with the Sun began in 1991 when she was invited to speak to the editorial board on behalf of MediaWatch. A year or two later, she was invited to sit on a 10-member Sun advisory committee on women. Then, in December 1994, syndicated columnist Anna Quindlen left the New York Times and the Sun decided to go local for her replacement. Graydon jumped at the chance. “I love being on that page,” she says. “If you’re going to have Trevor Nautens in there, it’s really important to have alternative perspectives.”

Graydon’s response to the Sun’s favourite misogynist is refreshingly dismissive. “He has a voice and a forum at the Sun,” she says, “but after a while he seems less threatening to me than the more insidious and pervasive discrimination you see in the Sun’s choice of headlines, like the one about a lesbian schoolteacher ‘pervy on students.”

Another problem by no means exclusive to the Sun is the continuing discrepancy in the media’s representation of women. In 1993, a one-day study of 15 newspapers across the country showed that women accounted for only 20 per cent of all news references and 30 per cent of the bylines. Graydon wanted to call the report “Women are dying to get into the headlines,” one of the reasons there were so many references to women that day was that Paul Bernard had just been arrested.

Given that much of her work with MediaWatch focuses on the advertising industry, Graydon is thankful that consumer advocacy is beginning to have an impact. Recently the Globe and Mail published a fashion supplement with a perfume ad depicting a woman tied up. Complaint was so vigorous that the sponsor, Holt Renfrew, later ran a full-page ad to apologize. Saturn, meanwhile, is running commercials with its progressive car ads. In one, a woman walks into a competitor’s dealer where she is shown a vanity mirror and is told only about the colour of the car. Then she goes to Saturn and is so impressed by the car’s overall performance that she decides to become a sales rep.

“Women would rather see themselves portrayed as intelligent, autonomous human beings than as the lipstick, stereotyped bimbo,” says Graydon. Nevertheless, because brand name identification is far more prevalent than it was 20 years ago, teenagers continue to be her toughest audience.

A year and a half ago, she was addressing a high school audience in Port Moody when one of the girls asked her of “male bashing.” The incident spoke volumes for Graydon about the fear of feminism, and the constant pressure to be attractive enough that young women begin to face in their mid-teens. “She said ‘I can’t stand to listen to this malt-bashing one more second.’ It was a real watermark for me.”

• BALANCING IT ALL is a regular Guardian column that focuses on the challenges faced by women activists.
**HEU demands Liberals stick to the facts**

HEU has called on the Liberal party to stop spreading lies about HEU members. The union made the demand in a recent letter to Liberal leader Gordon Campbell.

North Vancouver-Seymour Liberal MLA Don Jarvis accused health care workers of "sitting at home being paid" in recent statements condemning the Employment Security Agreement.

On a local cable TV show in October, Jarvis said, "From what I understand, and I believe it to be true, hundreds of them are sitting at home being paid; not working. You can tell I'm not a socialist. This is a true humanitarian and that is what they are creating and it's causing problems. We are going to change it."

Jarvis' comments were followed by Liberal leader Gordon Campbell's Oct. 15 statement in Kamloops claiming that the ESA has drained $725 million from the health care system. (By HEU calculations, the Accord has saved more than $740 million and no one is paid to stay at home.)

**Spirited rally backs medicare**

by Daniel Gawthrop

THE TRADE UNION movement was out in full force at Vancouver General Hospital Nov. 1, as more than 300 health care workers, seniors and other unionists observed National Medicare Week with a spirited noon hour rally at Vancouver General Hospital and a protest march at the construction site of Dr. Brian Day's private surgical clinic.

Alexa McDonough, federal NDP leader, called for united action in defending medicare. "We've got a knock-'em-down, drag-'em-out fight on our hands," she said. "It is absolutely critical that we speak with one voice."

McDonough, speaking two days after the Quebec referendum, said the federal government's willingness to "take apart our social services" was partly responsible for dividing Quebeckers.

Several speakers noted how the recent shift toward private clinics and continuing cutbacks to health care services show that governments are willing to sacrifice the basic principles of medicare.

**Threats continue at Chiwiod local**

In a tough fight for a fair first contract, HEU's new Chiwiod local to Williams Lake achieved a major victory Oct. 16 when a fired HEU activist was reinstated to her counselling job at the women's transition house only moments before a wrongful dismissal hearing was to begin.

But bev Grisdale, who was initially fired Sept. 27, was out of two members of the HEU bargaining unit to be threatened with further disciplinary action on Nov. 21, only a month after her reinstatement. Grisdale received the written warning after a Nov. 17 bargaining session was called off by the employer rep.

Grisdale's initial firing was prompted by a complaint to management that her husband had dropped by the house to deliver her a bowl of soup. Grisdale was reinstated with all her back pay but the union has filed various UFO complaints against the employer rep, who left the table two minutes into talks when Grisdale showed up at the bargaining meeting two days after her firing.

Williams Lake Transition House is a residence for physically, emotionally or sexually abused women. The house, which has up to 16 residents at a time, offers counselling for women as well as children who witness abuse. The facility was certified last May.
Union ready to face change

By Fred Musin

The way that an organization responds to challenges is a good indicator of its culture and strength. HEU is currently dealing with several very important issues. We are in the countdown to 1996, a year that is anticipated to be extremely difficult, especially given the right-wing backlash in Canada and the rebuilding of the provincial NDP. We are waiting to see the direction of the Labour Relations Board regarding the definition of a para-medical profession. Good or bad, this decision will impact thousands of our members.

After six years as our secretary-business manager, Carmela Allsvo has decided to step down to pursue her career in labour law and to attend to personal matters that the rigors of union activism often make difficult. We are sorry to see Carmela go.

During her tenure we re-engaged after decades of bargaining in 1989 and achieved tremendous gains, especially in the areas of pay equity and comparability. We were the first major union to strike against the new government and our innovative job action in 1992 united our membership. The Employment Security Agreement remains a landmark document for proper restructuring that has paved the way for other unions. Carmela was instrumental in all of this and HEU re-establishing our place, through CUPE, in the house of labour.

Under our structure, a change in business manager is a natural process. We hire people with specific expertise, political instincts and experience. The reality is that for them to further their career and personal development often requires a change. Only the timing is unknown.

The reaction to Carmela's announcement has been many — initially shock and regret, and then concern for HEU.

Rest assured that HEU remains strong and is not in a crisis. Carmela has helped to develop and expand the skills of our staff and Provincial Executive. We recently concluded a contract renewal with our staff union that expires in 1999. The Bill 46 (the Dorey health care restructuring plan) process has resulted in us obtaining over 15,000 signatures in a short period of time, mainly as a result of our member on-the-job campaign and our phone bank. The Provincial Executive were able to inform each of our locals about Carmela in advance of our media release and reassure them. The bargaining committee is already preparing for negotiations.

A time of change is also an opportunity for growth. HEU has considerable resources to deal with challenges. We have terrific members, a dedicated and supportive staff and a progressive vision that will continue.

We wish Carmela well. After all that she has contributed to HEU, she deserves time for herself. Good luck Carmela.

Healing circle helps build determination to overcome equity setback

by Geoff Meggs

A first Nations healing circle initiated by HEU Provincial Executive member Minnie Dennis, herself a Gitksan woman, helped angry, troubled minority delegates, as well as their supporters, to move forward from a devastating setback at last month's CUPE convention.

After years of struggle to overcome racism and discrimination within CUPE, the union's Rainbow Forum hoped that the national convention would approve two new seats on the National Executive Board, one for a person of colour and another for a First Nations representative.

But convention delegates turned down the proposal — which required a two-thirds majority — by a wide margin. The convention second day, even before a person of colour had an opportunity to speak.

The circle reflected deepseated concerns about "special rights" and equality that HEU itself is confronting through its equity caucus.

I am extremely disappointed," long-time CUPE human rights activist David Onyale told a subsequent meeting of the forum, "but out of that disappointment I can see some hope.

"We have a movement that speaks out, that's strong, but we have a strong union only when we listen to the pain our members face. We must ensure people feel their voice can be heard in the decision-making process. It has to happen. If we don't solve some of these problems, like sexism, racism and homophobia then we will speak, but we'll just be another voice.

"Mervis White, a black hospital worker who participated in CUPE's illegal hospital strike in Ontario in 1979, recalled the long struggle against discrimination he faced even with his union.

"In the hospital sector, there are many people who look like us," she said. The defeat of the resolution, she charged, meant the union felt "you can accept our dues, but you can't accept us.

"When the session ended, Dennis invited all present to form a circle so that each could express their appreciation to every other person present. These were tears, hugging and laughter, but a strong determination to keep the battle going.

In an emotional debate on the convention's final day, union president Judy Darcy announced a series of reforms the National Executive Board will undertake, including a national conference on racism, to continue work on the issue until the next convention.

CAN I BE YOUR TEDDY BEAR? Debbie Zibrik, left, and Ruth Hasman with just a few of their thousand fluffy creations since 1993.

Dear Bears offer Xmas comfort

Looking for a furry friend to keep you warm over the holidays? Wondering what to do with that old fur coat you inherited from your grandmother? Either way, HEU members Debbie Zibrik and Ruth Hasman have a solution that's bound to melt your heart: Dear Bears, a home-based company that produces stuffed teddy bears from recycled fur coats and other materials.

Zibrik is a part-time dietician and Hasman a part-time clerk at Children's Hospital.

In 1993, Zibrik found a fur coat at a church bazaar and decided to turn it into four bears, one for each of her children. Shortly afterward, Zibrik decided to start a business. Demand for the bears was so high that she quickly added her colleague to help. Since then, Zibrik and Hasman have produced about one thousand teddies.

The bears are created to client specifications — you can get them grumpy, happy, carefree or sleepy — and are popular in Ecuador, Lamb or mink. Hand-crafted with fully jointed limbs, glass eyes and embroidered noses, each Dear Bear is identified by a brass medallion inscribed with the words: We once were all coats worn by someone else. Who, in loving memory will always be her voice.

So as you give me a hug close to you, just remember DEAR BEARS need lots of love too.

"People inherit furs and then put them into storage or stuff them to the back of the closet," says Zibrik. "One of the greatest moments for us is to see the reactions on the faces of our customers when we reunite them with their coats, only this time as a teddy bear."

Adds Hasman, "It appeals to both males and females — it's not just a cute women's sort of thing. Even my 18-year-old son said 'Can you make me one too, Mom?'

Several of the bears have been donated to Children's Hospital in Vancouver, as well as Alberta Children's Hospital, the H.R. Macdonald Endowment Action and the Rotary Club.

The $30 craft work donation was especially poignant, as Zibrik's daughter was on the ward during the summer when she was diagnosed with leukemia.

"Teddies have a magic all their own and they steal right into your heart," says Zibrik. "It's special."
It is five years since Henderson, who is in the later stages of Alzheimer’s Disease, was assessed as requiring care in an institutional setting. Today, he may be the most advanced case in a home care setting in the province.

Together he, his family and Cipparone, his main at-home caregiver, are exploring new territory in trying to care for Henderson and thousands of others by innovative means. The hope is that with the aid of the team of nurses and caregivers, Henderson and his family can experience quality care that respects his wishes and allows him to maintain his dignity. The result is that Henderson can live at his home and his family can enjoy their lives. The family and caregivers are more effective and the stress is reduced. Cipparone was also able to continue his work as a nurse.

Their story - in many respects an ideal experience for both patient and caregiver - tells us much about what ‘quality care’ could mean to patients, their families and their caregivers if the resources were there. It serves also as a warning that even the best community-based setting requires a degree of family commitment and unpaid labour that may be beyond the means of or the capabilities of many families.

Kathleen Cipparone’s working day begins with an early morning drive to Henderson’s house in Strathcona, a few blocks east of Chinatown. By 7:30 a.m., she’s saying goodbye to Maggie Sturges and Henderson, Henderson’s daughter, and Bob Sarti, Sturges’ partner, as they head off to work. Until about 5 p.m., five days a week, Cipparone provides Henderson with one-on-one care. A former HEU member and a veteran of several nursing assignments in an institutional setting, Cipparone declares this “the most satisfying nursing job I’ve ever had. It’s an occupation that I really think I can do well. I’m happy with it. And I think the same is true of the people I work with.”

The shortage of staff in most long-term care wards makes it impossible to give patients the attention and care they deserve. This is heartbreaking and many caring nurses become emotionally and physically drained. It’s a very sad situation.”

Stan Henderson, by contrast, “is really treated as an individual. He’s ambulatory, and I can give one-on-one care. Music is a major part of the program, but basically we just let Stan be Stan. Every day is different.”

A gentle, quiet and humorous man who likes to make people laugh, Henderson is slow to anger and quick to recover. Although his condition has progressed through all the classic stages of dementia, he has never been violent or aggressive. Despite his advanced age and congestive heart failure, he remains healthy otherwise, all factors that make caregiving easier.

Most mornings see Henderson awake and alert by 9 a.m. Cipparone, meanwhile, has prepared breakfast and begins Henderson’s routine with a brief chat and some personal grooming.

On a recent October morning, however, Henderson was baffled by the suggestion that he eat breakfast.

“I had breakfast two days ago,” he says grumpily when Cipparone offers juice and cereal. A few moments later, he’s changed his mind. “I want breakfast, but I don’t want to sit up.”

Noting signs of agitation, Cipparone quickly conciliates and heads back downstairs to give Henderson time to compose himself. Within minutes, he’s bustling along to his soft seat player and Cipparone tries once more. “Would you like me to put the towel under your chin?” she asks. “Anything you do is all right,” Henderson says grumpily, and the meal is under way.

After breakfast, it’s time to coax Henderson out of bed and into some clothes. His diaper needs changing and convincing him to co-operate with toileting procedures can be difficult. Today, Henderson’s slow movement out of bed is accelerated by a sudden desire to go to the bathroom. By the time he arrives, however, the reason for the trip is forgotten. “What are we doing here?” he asks, again sounding aggrieved. Cipparone calmly works through the problem with him and Henderson is soon ensconced in the television room watching the Lawrence Welk and figure-skating videos that are his main entertainment.

At least two days a week, Cipparone drives Henderson to a special program for geriatric patients at St. Vincent’s Health Care Society in South Vancouver, where he plays and interacts with other adults living at home.

On other days, weather permitting, she will pack a picnic and take Henderson for a stroll in Stanley Park. “We walk from bench to bench and he talks to the little ones. He likes children.”

Because of the intensive care she is able to give, Cipparone can see her effort reflected in Henderson’s health and behaviour. She can monitor his medications with extreme care and advocate adjustments when Henderson visits his physician. She’s also able to keep the daycare program staff well briefed on his condition.

She is convinced that the consistency and familiarity of the care he receives in his home has enabled Henderson to live a
Henderson likes to relax in front of the television with videos of figure-skating or big-band concerts from the 1940s. Ciparrone is able to keep close track of his physical and mental well-being.

longer, fuller life than he might have in an institutional setting.

The fact that he remains at home, and will until he dies, was partly his own decision and partly his family's. It was only possible through an unlikely combination of hard work and sheer luck.

IN RETROSPECT, THE CLEAREST WARNING about Stan Henderson's impending illness came when his wife of many years, few of whom the family was, but her mother was. They had remarried in 1979 and she realized, when she said Stan was "acting crazy.

"The more we denied it, the more hysterical she became. No one would accept her analysis. We had a family meeting and we all said we would take him. He moved in with my brother in North Vancouver, but he couldn't get the hang of the bus system, so he moved to Victoria with my sister Paddy.

"But, when she went to Japan for several months, he came to live with us in Vancouver and ultimately he decided to stay. He was about 75.

A long-time middle management employee at Imperial Oil, Henderson had led an active life that included lots of mountain-climbing and hiking. He quickly developed a routine of walking each day right across town to the West End Community Centre where he could visit friends and do some carpet-bowling. At suppers, he would walk back home.

This love of walking nearly proved fatal. On Sigurdsen's fortieth birthday, several years ago, Henderson didn't show up for dinner. The family passed a frantic night on the phone and combing the back alleys. The next morning, he came strolling up the street as if nothing had happened.

"I shouted, 'where have you been?'" Sigurdsen recalls, "and he just blinked like this was some kind of high school test. And then he came up with some kind of story, trying to please us. To this day, we have no idea where he was."

Incredibly, the family remained unconvinced that anything was fundamentally amiss, making adjustments for his failing memory without considering the possibility of an underlying cause. Sari thinks this exemplary attitude — or stubborn denial — combined with a strong community safety net made the earlier stages of Henderson's disease easier for all concerned.

Sometimes, Henderson was protected by the many people around the community who befriended him during his visits to the local community centre. Although both Sigurdsen and Sari were aware of his illness, she as a school board secretary, and he as a journalist — both also on the Carnegie Centres and the focus for community life in the Downtown Eastside.

When Carnegie regulators learned of Henderson's propensity to wander, they kept an eye out for him. One winter day, a Carnegie friend spotted him far off his regular route and turned in the alarm. "Stan's on the loose again," Sigurdsen was told and she rushed from work to track him down. She found him wandering in the west end, suffering from what proved to be a congestive heart failure.

It was only as a result of this incident that Henderson's doctor realized that something more was amiss and ordered a full assessment. To Sigurdsen's shock, her father could not even remember the most basic facts, including the day, the month or the year.

The diagnosis of Alzheimer Disease was a devastating blow to the family and a signal that what was left was about to become worse: increased confusion, sleepless nights, Incontinent wandering. A health unit warned that 20 percent of older people had Alzheimer Disease, and a small monthly insurance payment to care for him in her home, the Spiers, also decided to take a year off work to help her father through what seemed likely to be his last months.

AN ENUMEROUSION SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY effort had delayed the day when Henderson might have to be institutionalized. It was a superhuman family effort to postpone it indefinitely.

By taking over her father's finances through a trust, Sigurdsen was able to increase Henderson's care. But what began as a casual arrangement with a former practical nurse in the community evolved into a decision to hire an agency nurse to provide five days a week of care in the home.

By late 1994, however, the money was given. Henderson's remaining income fell far short of what was necessary to keep Ciparrone, who had worked with Stan for more than a year.

Another family meeting convened to consider the options. Sigurdsen estimated it would cost $200 a month for each part of the home to sustain the effort, enough to force one family member to rent out his house and to wipe out the savings another branch of the clan had put aside for their children's post-secondary education. Ironically, if Henderson had been institu-
Only a very high commitment from Stan Henderson's extended family makes his homecare situation financially feasible. Joining him for dinner are (left to right) Clipperone, daughter-in-law Marilyn Henderson, son Stanley W. Henderson, Bob Sartl and daughter Maggie Sigurjonsdottir. All-in-all, seven adults in four households contribute to Stan's care.

UNPAID WOMEN'S WORK

Sigurjonsdottir estimates she puts in about a day a week on the paperwork necessary to maintain her father at home. She must manage all his affairs and provide detailed monthly statements to government, as well as manage Clipperone's payroll.

FOR STAN HENDERSON, who has benefited from an almost ideal combination of community, family and government support, homecare seems to have been a happy and rewarding experience. It has been a tremendous amount of work and struggle for his family, but it's a commitment they would not give up for anything. The arrival of the CSL funding was "just in time," Sigurjonsdottir said, "because our money had run out and we couldn't stop caring for Stan."

"I know Stan's history. I know it drives him crazy if his socks aren't pulled up. He can't say anything, but I can do it for him." Much of the burden was eased, she believes, by the special training and assistance she has received from trained caregivers like Kathleen Clipperone and those who preceded her. Sartl, who works an early morning shift, acknowledges he was often driven to distraction by Henderson's midnight tours of the house, flicking on every light to see where he was.

"People say, 'Wow, you even have to wipe his ass,'" Sartl laughs. "But we're glad to have him. Sure, there are restrictions, but there are all the pleasures associated with it. I'm sure we'll look back on the Stan era with fondness."

"It's a pioneering, going into an uncharted area with great dignity. The things he has to put up with—people saying, 'bend over, I'll wipe you'—and he's showing us how to do it, with great dignity. He'll live long like that for us forever."

HOW'S YOUR WORKPLACE?

Are you satisfied with the quality of care your workplace allows you to provide? The Guardian would like to hear from HR members about their experiences in caring for the elderly and their reactions to Stan Henderson's story.

WRITE OR CALL US at the numbers listed on page 2.
Pledge made to bring wages, conditions into the 1990s

HEU's bargaining spokesperson Carmela Allevato says the union has reached out beyond hospitals and into the community to bring the benefits, protection and respect to community service workers that come from having a collective agreement.

Since the last Wage Policy conference in 1990, Allevato said hundreds of community workers had joined HEU.

Community health workers are on the cutting edge of new health care delivery systems, they are in the 1950s when it comes to wages, working conditions and contract rights," she told delegates at October's 13th Wage Policy conference.

"These workers have joined us because they believe only HEU can meet their needs as health workers." Allevato pledged that HEU would meet the challenge of making that a reality.

The priority plan for bargaining

CLOSE TO 400 hundred delegates from HEU locals across the province wrapped up an intense bargaining conference Oct. 17 with a plan for master agreement negotiations that will start in early 1996.

Delegates at HEU's 13th Wage Policy conference settled through more than 900 contract demand proposals and pieced together a six-point plan of issues to press for action. The plan includes:

- renewed employment security
- no concessions pledge
- one union, one contract
- action on workload to make the workplace safer
- a fair wage increase and benefit improvements
- zeroing out completion of HEU's pay equity settlement

As well, delegates elected a new provincial bargaining committee which is already meeting to prepare for negotiations.

Bargaining committee members are:
- David Ridley, Royal Jubilee, Sheila Rowsell, G.F. Strong, Barb Burke, Penncity Regional; Richard Dennis, Yaleton; Margaret Cavin, Cornerstone; Maurice Smith, Burnaby; Mike Borson, B.C. Childrens; Julia Anesh, Surrey Memorial; Heather MacLaren, Jackman Manor; and Della McLeod, Willowhaven. They're joined by president Fred Mazin, secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato, and financial secretary Mary Laplante.

Delegates unanimously endorsed a comprehensive employment security demand to preserve health services, light privatization and contracting out, and enhance early retirement and retraining opportunities. The demand also called for improved access to regular positions for casuals, and improved seniority rights for workers displaced or transferred.

"Winning the Employment Security

For many delegates from new locals, the Wage Policy conference was their first look at how HEU bargains. Here's what some of them thought about it:

"I was pretty impressed with the organizers. I just wish it could have gone on longer, but I found it was very helpful. It was good to see all the First Nations people who were there.

Marie Sawyer, COMMERCE HEALTH REPRESENTATIVE St. George's Health Centre; Chairperson, House of Life local.

"It was a great learning opportunity because I'm new to union stuff. I was impressed by delegates' commitment and support for each other's issues."

Bruce Devitt, RECREATION PROGRAMMER Canadian Mental Health Association CUPF local 3495.

"It's been enjoyable learning about the union's process and seeing the dedication of delegates. I'm looking forward to bargaining a first collective agreement.

Laura Arason, HOUSING SUPPORT WORKER Progresive Housing local.

"It was very informative, very well organized. All the conference staff were attentive to our needs as new members. I learned a lot."

Dwayne Page, MENTAL HEALTH WORKER Glenmore Lodge, Penncity CUPF local 603.

"The democracy here is beyond belief and there's lots of compassion. I'm amazed at the quality and depth of delegates. It showed me what HEU is about.

Bob Peacock, NURSING TEAM AIDE Broadway/Pentecostal Lodge.

"The conference set an agenda to make health care an important issue. I met a lot of really concerned members. Well done!"

Nancy Fryett, RELIEF CORDONARY AIDE Haven Hill Retirement Centre, Pentecost CUPF local 603.
A commitment to win fairness

HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allavato pledged that other unions will not be able to take away HEU members under the process following the report of Health Sector Labour Relations Commissioner Jim Disney.

And delegates to the Wage Policy Conference followed-up Allavato’s pledge by approving an emergency resolution mandating the provincial executive to “undertake whatever actions are necessary to protect our union’s jurisdiction.”

In her report to the conference, Allavato outlined how the Labour Relations Board is threatening to take thousands of members out of HEU by red-flagging paramedical professionals after HEU was excluded from representing workers in that capacity.

“We will fight this attack on our members with all our strength,” she said. “This union will not be held in. They will not take any of our members away.”

The resolution passed unanimously after members of the provincial executive and other members warned of the danger posed by the labour board attack on HEU.

“We’re going to fight to the bitter end to keep every member, and we won’t back down,” said Fraser Valley regional vice-president Kate Marleau.

Halle McMillen of the Comox local said that as a Licensed Practical Nurse, “I want to stay in HEU.”

Allavato outlined in her report that HEU has fought many battles and won many important gains in the five years since the last wage policy conference.

“Our adversaries are learning that the worst mistake they can make is to underestimate the health workers of this province,” she said.

While HEU’s hopes for the New Democratic Party government in Victoria have been largely realized, she said that these hopes were realized only after struggle.

The Employment Security Agreement has not only been good for HEU members but for the public, who have the lowest and most efficient health care system in Canada, she said.

Allavato questioned the need for further cuts from health care to deal with the federal government’s financial cutbacks, and the maintenance of the quality of health care. “We are proud of our public health care system, we want to keep it public, and we don’t want it privatized,” she said. “We will fight for that.”

HEU’s Bargaining Committee is made up of 10 elected members as well as president Fred Mundle, financial secretary Mary LaPlante and the secretary-business manager. Those elected included: David Ridley, Royal Jubilee; Sheila Rossowell, G.F. Strong; Barb Burke, Pentiction; Richard Dennis, Yaletown; Margaret Cavin, Cornerstone; Maurice Smith, Burnaby; Mike Bonason, B.C. Children’s; Jufia Ament, Surrey; Heather MacLaren, Jackman Manor and Della McLeod, Windermere.

Agreement is key to our communities to keep them going,” said G.F. Strong delegate Sheila Rosewell.

HEU members have a tremendous capacity and creative ability for winning what’s needed, not just for themselves but for those who use our services, and for those who come behind us,” she said.

With the existing ESA set to expire in five months, Cumberland local and Provincial Executive member Linda Hargreaves said you only had to talk to other health care workers across Canada to find out just how important renewed employment security is. She warned that health employers are just sitting back waiting for March 1988 to strip HEU members of their security.

After a lively debate, delegates also adopted a companion resolution that allows displaced or transferred union members to carry 100 per cent seniority to their new work site. The motion also established a job posting and bumping plan that would focus on the facility as the first priority, opening up only to regional and province-wide steps if qualified applicants or a comparable job didn’t exist at a local level.

“I’ve always supported the concept of province-wide seniority,” said Lions Gate delegate Clarke Gardner. “It’s something we need, and we need it now,” he said.

Royal Jubilee delegate Pam Corratt said health care reform has forced her to rethink her opposition to expanded seniority rights. “I’m afraid of losing my job to someone bumping,” Corratt said. “But if we vote for this we achieve protection for everyone. We have to look at protecting the jobs of all our members.”

Not all delegates supported the resolution, including Penticton Regional’s Bob Boschee. “I live in the Okanagan. I’d like to think my job is relatively safe. I hear transfer payments are being cut, and I see hospital closures elsewhere in the province and people saying ‘I’d like to move to the Okanagan. That’s a threat to me and my job.”

But Vancouver General’s Leo Bibo said Boschee’s fears were misplaced. “All the vacancies would have to be posted in the workplace first,” Bibo said. “If the facility can’t fill it and the region can’t fill it then it goes province-wide. Only then could you move into the Okanagan.”

Delegates also approved measures that focused benefit improvements on those with the greatest need, like long-term disability claims.

New Vista local’s Eva Wallenburg told the conference that she’s been on LTD since 1986 and receives $778 a month. After taxes she has $530 a month left over.

“I’m fortunate to have a husband who works,” Wallenburg said. “Without that [members] would be better off on welfare than on LTD as it stands now.”

All eyes will be on HEU, says CUPE’s Kirk

CUPE B.C. President Bernice Kirk.

Workers throughout B.C.’s public sector will be watching HEU bargaining in the coming months because HEU will set the pattern for wage settlements, says Bernice Kirk, president of the B.C. Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

“I cannot stress how important your bargaining is, not only for health care workers, but for the whole public sector in B.C.,” Kirk told the Wage Policy Conference.

A number of the delegates present were representing CUPE locals which transferred into HEU under the Bill 48 process.

She said all B.C. public sector workers will face a tough fight at the bargaining table because the new Public Sector Employers Council is “working against” bargaining by trying to impose wage controls.

“You are going to be leading the way,” Kirk said.

The conference was also attended by B.C. Nurses’ Union president Eivy Werner and BCNU chief operating officer Anne Harvey.
Why I am a “sovereignist”

by Francine Barrette

I AM GOING TO try in a few words to explain what has been on the table for more than 100 years. I can only talk to you with my heart but I will also attempt to use reason in my explanation.

I believe fundamentally that it is possible for us, being the Francophone people of North America, to stand up and be proud of our vitality, our language and our culture, all the while respecting Canadians in other provinces.

We have tried many times to be recognized as a distinct people within the existing structures of Canada, without success. This is why I believe that the best way to win this recognition is to become sovereign and to sit down with the other provinces to negotiate a real partnership. Among other things, this would permit us to:

• End the constitutional impasses that have cost so much energy and money (more than $325 million between 1990 and 1997);
• Prevent federal cutbacks in education and social programs and avoid the damage these cuts would cause;
• Decide ourselves what we want to do with our money and our natural resources, and end costly duplication of government ministries such as revenue, agriculture, health, environment, etc. to avoid duplication of efforts;
• Stop inequalities in federal spending: between 1979 and 1981, Quebec received 18.6 per cent of federal funding for research and development, while Ontario got 30 per cent of this money.
• I could list many other reasons, but above all, we want to be equal partners with our neighbours in the other provinces, respecting our two peoples for the best possible results.

At the same time, I want to be clear that there is no question of our quitting the Canadian Union of Public Employees after Oct. 30. Our place in CUPE is properly recognized.

* Barrette is a health care worker at Hôpital Ste-Jeanne D’Arc, Montreal, and a member of CUPE local 2885. She wrote this letter to follow CUPE members in HEU just a few days before the referendum on Oct. 30.

CUPE pledges national action against service cuts, bed closures

MONTREAL – When health care workers from Newfoundland to British Columbia gathered at last month’s convention of the Canadian Union of Public Employees they found that their employers all speak the same language: hospital closures, rollbacks, layoffs, cutbacks, mergers and more workload.

“They want to cure the deficit by making health care worse,” Quebec health activist Guy Comeau said. It’s the same everywhere.

And across the country, health workers are turning to grassroots organizing and regional and provincial master agreements as the only way forward as provincial governments impose cuts of up to 20 per cent and massive privatization drives.

“In Saskatchewan, we’re heading for one agreement for long-term care, detox centres and women’s centres,” one delegate said. “Hopefully, we’ll soon move to one agreement for all of Canada.”

The convention was a homecoming for HEU, which rejoined CUPE as the unions’ B.C. health services division last year. In three separate meetings, HEU delegates discussed joint action with representatives of CUPE’s 120,000 other health workers across the country.

It was a critical convention for CUPE, held on the eve of the Canadian referendum and extended by two days to deal with long-standing issues about the union’s structure.

By weeks end, delegates had:

• adopted a key policy paper entitled Organizing the Union to provide more support, education and resources to grassroots activities fighting to defend their locals;
• committed to a national effort to bargaining reduced hours of work without a cut in pay to protect jobs and services;
• pledged full support to CUPE’s Ontario and Quebec locals in their battle to stop the closure of 10 Toronto hospitals and seven Montreal facilities.

HEU’s important place in the national union was acknowledged by the election of union president Fred Mizin to a spot on the National Executive Board. He joins Bernice Kirk, president of CUPE’s B.C. Division, and Calliers Jordan, the division’s secretary-treasurer, as a B.C. representative on the board.

But for HEU delegates, the main excitement came from the unprecedented opportunity to meet and work alongside public sector workers, especially hospital, long-term care and community workers, from every part of the country.

One problem confronted in every jurisdiction is the increasing pressure to upgrade and train.

“The government is demanding more qualifications to do the same work,” said Alberta LPN Gwen DeMarr. “It’s either get more education or you will

LEAD ORGANIZER Judy Darcy, national president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, vowed to fight to defend medicare and the health system.

be fired. These are people who have been doing their job for 20 years and doing it well.”

It’s the same scenario in Quebec, said Montreal union leader Francine Barrette.

Because nursing managers tend to discriminate against licensed practical nurses “they don’t allow us to practice certain kinds of care. They even abolish jobs and others get them.”

In Alberta, on the other hand, LPNs are being handed more and more duties, including handling out medication. But even this duty is now being passed to nursing aides because “what they want is cheap labour, right down to $7 an hour.”

CUPE president Judy Darcy, who attended the session, told delegates that “the fight to defend quality health care is not just for the people in this room, it’s one of the number one fights for all of CUPE.”

“Medi-Action National action against health service cuts must be a priority, HEU president Fred Mizin told delegates.
Scabs keep Irving open

by Mark Higgins/Labour Times

MONCTON — As a bitter strike at the Irving Oil Refinery in Sarnia, Ont., moves into its second year, workers in the port city are firmly resolved against their powerful employer.

But aided by a large stable of scabs and union members who have their own unions' picket line, the company seems prepared to ignore its protesting workers indefinitely.

Unlike B.C., New Brunswick doesn't have an anti-slab law.

The strike began on May 13, 1994 when company officials escorted unionized staff off the job site after they served strike notice. The 264 workers are members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers' Union of Canada (CEP). Since then, the only official contact between the company and union officials was a three-day meeting in May which resulted in no progress on any issues.

When the strike began the company wanted to increase the standard work week by an average of four hours from the standard 37.5 hours.

Since then, however, Irving has steadily increased its concession demands. According to CEP officials the company sent letters to all union members outlining demands before it would end the dispute. Central was the renewal of union representatives from the grievance procedure for promotions, demotions, and terminations. Walsham says that Irving is also demanding an "expectation clause," giving the company total flexibility on contract and job descriptions.

Now, the company wants to cut 140 unionized positions, claiming it has found new efficiencies while operating with management and replacement workers."

It's as bad as ever in the Philippines

LABOUR LEADER Crispin Beltran of the Philippines wants his fellow trade unionists in Canada to know that despite what you've read or heard, things in his country are as bad as they've ever been.

In fact, the circumstances for workers and the poor are worse than they were under the former regime of hated dictator Ferdinand Marcos or even under Japanese occupation during World War II. Beltran said a Vancouver audience of labour activists Oct. 27.

"An ordinary worker in the minimum-wage category in the Philippines earns one-seventh or one-eighth of the earnings of an average Canadian worker," said Beltran, who is the chairman of the Kilusang Mayo Uno, or May First Movement.

"Our only alternative is to challenge the powers that be.

Aussies win battle of wits on wages

In a massive show of solidarity by its 3,500 members in Victoria, the Hudson's Bay Co. has prevailed in a battle of wits with intransigent employers by winning an 11 per cent wage hike within 18 months — the biggest wage rise any union has squeezed from the right wing state government.

The increase, which began with an immediate five per cent boost backdated to July 1, means that workers will earn between $43 and $54 more every week within two years.

The union also won the right to arbitrate a number of key issues including job security, paid family leave, access to literacy and numeracy training, access to employer-funded childcare facilities, and commitments to provide healthy and safe working environments. The increase covers public sector health care workers including cleaners, orderlies, administrative support staff, patrons, radiographers, speech pathologists and many others.

The HSUA had been calling for a 14 per cent increase but was initially offered only six per cent — and that was only if the union made no claim for the next two years and agreed to demonstrate and achieve productivity increases to earn the last half of the increase.

Not surprisingly, workers were doubly outraged that the government was willing to give a 25 per cent across the board pay rise for specialists and 100 per cent rise for anaesthetists.

HSUA members responded with calls for strike action. On Aug. 6 the government and employers caved in and offered a better agreement to talks, but the government reneged on it three days later when the HSUA held its first stop work meeting.

Union members then endorsed a motion to strike for next 24 hours and continue work bans previously introduced in hospitals across the state.

With health workers increasing the pressure, the tentative agreement was won in late August.

"This is a great collective win," said HSUA secretary Jan Armstrong. "It is a marvellous reward for the hard work of shop stewards and union representatives. We can now report that we are presently gaining 100 new members per week. The HSUA will only get stronger."

Health and safety is Canadian workers' number one issue

A national poll of trade unionists by Angus Reid has confirmed that health and safety on the job has become workers' leading concern in the 1990s.

According to the recent survey, sponsored by a number of unions, 89 per cent of those interviewed placed health and safety at the top of their personal priority list for unions. By contrast, 80 per cent placed wage and benefits improvements at the top of their list, and only 54 per cent thought their union's top priority should be supporting progressive social causes and public policies for working people.
Coffee break

All stories guaranteed factual. Sources this issue: Globe and Mail "Quarterly Report."

Blind justice

A Sarona, California forest Service worker has failed to convince a judge that his
eyewitness was so bad that he
couldn’t see how much govern-
ment property he had stolen.
Gary Gunderson, 43, was
sentenced to nine months in
jail and five years’ probation.
Forest officials said he stole
trucksloads of fuel, including
tent straps, ready-to-eat meals,
furniture and a 5,000-watt
generator.

And my social insurance number is...
A bank robber in Sarnia,
Ontario was a bit too helpful
when he tried to hold up the
Bank of Nova Scotia for
$2,000.
Michael Myers, 31, pleaded
guilty and was sentenced to
two years less a day in jail after
he handed a teller a note
demanding $50 and $100 bills
or the bank would be blown up.
But the note, which was
written on a withdrawal slip,
had his name and signature on
it.

Deja vu, Brian?

Education officials were left
scratching their heads after a
12-year-old Auckland, Scotland
man was able to pass himself
off as a 17-year-old and spend
a year as a pupil at his former
school, gaining top exam
grades and admission to a
medical college.

Officials, baffled by his
move, launched an inquiry
into how he managed to fool
two pupils and teachers, some
of whom had been at the
school long enough to have
known him the first time around.

Brian MacKinnon’s cover was
blown when fellow pupils
found he had two passports,
showing different ages.

Canine cunning

Police officers in London,
England smashed their way into
a house with sledgehammers
following an emergency call
placed by Jemima, a terrier pup.
Owner Hannah Wilson, 23,
was at work when the restless
dog pulled the phone off a
table at Wotton’s next door
flat and scratched the “9”
button three times, enough to
call the emergency line.

Police officers, fearing the
caller had collapsed, raced to
the scene. “We found Jemima,”
said Wilson. “It was just a
deadly accident.”

If it feels good...

Stylish shows will be pro-
hibited in Fort Dodge, Iowa,
unless parading enthusiasts
pledge to keep their clothes
on, said Mayor Joe McElroy.
Local officials were enraged when
a team of nudists dropped into
their town during one show.

Who needs ‘O?'

A 17-year-old Ferris boy
swapped his way to a world
mosquito-killing record, fin-
ishing off 21 of the humming
blondies in five minutes at
a contest in Arctic Lapland.
Harri Pellonpaa defeated 20
other entrants, who bared arms,
legs, and chests to attract the
insects, plentiful this year
because of damp, warm weath-
er. The previous record was
seven.

Coffee break
HEU people

Fall scenes spark member interest

The Holy Family local marked Thanksgiving with a special fall display right underneath their union bulletin board and a turkey draw.

What better way is there, says local chairperson Nojok Goodman, to get members to take notice of union activities. "It's not a coincidence," says Goodman, "that while people are around the display filling out their tickets for the turkey draw, they are also taking notice of all the news and opportunities on the union wall."

Sonner retires at Richmond

Laundry-side Nancy Sonner is set to retire from Richmond Lions Manor after more than 16 years of service. Sonner, whose last day is Jan. 16, is planning to move to Kelowna and hopes to get involved in volunteer work.

TRAVELLER'S RETIREE Mary Florio, pictured here with Santa Claus at last year's Travellers' Lodge local Christmas party, is retiring from the Nanaimo facility after 16 years of service.

Flo rico retires from Travellers' Lodge

Nursing attendant Mary Florio is retiring after more than 16 years of service from the Nanaimo long-term care facility. After stepping down from full-time employment in 1996, Florio has continued to work in a pinch as a casual.

Florio, who is affectionately known as "Mother Mary," is concentrating on her studies in a literacy program at Malaspina College so she can help others learn to read and write.

"It comes as no surprise," writes local chairperson Muriel Schmidt, "that Mary wants to be a literacy volunteer. She is always helping others.

"Thank you for so many good years," says Schmidt.

INTEREST SPARKER Holy Family local used a special Thanksgiving display to attract more members to the union's bulletin board. From left are housekeeping's Draginja Mrakic, Madalina Marcelino, May Tan, Jeannette Goodwin, Mary Serpa, and Tay Kee Tan Mok.

Queen Alexandra makes baseball, horseshoes inroads

Chief shop steward Merv Schmitz writes to report two summer successes for his Queen Alexandra local from Victoria. First, the locals' softball team took top honours in a division of the annual Victoria inter-hospital slow-pitch baseball tournament. That was followed by top honours at another sporting event — this time in the horseshoe competition at the annual labour day picnic.

Diana Bertrand, the only woman entered in the competition, and her partner Bob Wilson, a Queen Alexandra member now working as an HEU staff rep in Victoria, took top honours in the Victoria Labour Council organized event. They defeated a BCGEU team that had had a stronghold on the event for the last three years.

Staff on the move

Welcome to Nancie Cohen who joins HEU as a research analyst in a temporary posting. Cohen brings more than 20 years of expertise into labour market development and education. She most recently served as a director of the Canadian Labour Market Development Board, a federal agency. Also, B.C. Women's local

PRINCE RUPERT'S Marie Horvath, right, and Rose Sawka, below third from left, both retired recently.

member Jean Donahue, has been hired as a permanent secretary II at the Vancouver site of the Provincial Office. Richmond local member Ken Manthey has been hired as a permanent part-time building service worker at the Vancouver site. Lions Gate locals Sandy Partridge is now the Vancouver site's switchboard operator. And, last but not least, Burnaby local's Cathy Shorter was the successful applicant for a permanent clerk position in the Vancouver site's photocopy/mailroom.

Horvath, Sawka retire in Prince Rupert

Two long-time Prince Rupert Regional Hospital staff retired recently. Payroll supervisor Marie Horvath is another beneficiary of the early retirement provisions of the Employment Security Agreement, after 29 years of service, while Rose Sawka, a housekeeping aide, retired after nearly 20 years of service.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES talk to us

We're working hard to make our union better for HEU members with disabilities. We'd like to hear from you. If you are on WCB or LTD or if you're invisibly/disabled in the workplace, let us know how the union can better meet your needs.

LEAVE A MESSAGE AT 604-539-9493 AND WE'LL GET BACK TO YOU.

ALL INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL.

HEU LESBIANS AND GAYS

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

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“THE BCMA WANTS YOU TO HAVE A CHOICE...”

“CASH OR CHARGE.”

The BCMA has a plan for your health care. Dr. Gur Singh, former head of the BCMA and a Kamloops Liberal candidate, has told Canadians to "get ready with Visa and MasterCard." That's private, for-profit health care - which is what they do in the US, where 37 million people have no medical coverage.

US-style two-tiered health care is a great system for doctors' profits and for the wealthy who can buy their way to the front of the line. But for the rest of us it's not so great - treatment is based on the size of your wallet not on your medical need.

It doesn't have to be that way. Health care unions are working with government and employers under the Employment Security Agreement to protect quality Medicare services. Please ask your doctor to cooperate with the rest of the health care community to keep Medicare strong.

Guardian
VOL. 13 NO 8
THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1995

Home care pioneers
Stan Henderson may be the most acute Alzheimer patient in a home care setting in the province. His unique caregiving situation can teach us a lot about quality care.

HEU heads to labour board
At least 15,000 HEU members have signed petitions calling on the B.C. Labour relations board to ensure they can stay with their union as the board considers the new "paramedical professional" bargaining unit.

Your bargaining agenda
HEU's Wage Policy Conference has set the bargaining priorities for next year's negotiations for a new Master Collective Agreement.

Alberta wildcat
How Calgary laundry workers forced Ralph Klein to back down from contracting out and massive budget cuts.

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