INTRODUCING HEU’S NEW PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE PAGE 8

PROJECTING ANGER
B.C. projectionists at Famous Players and Cineplex Odeon theatres are fighting a proposed 60 per cent wage rollback with pickets and solidarity from other unions.
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Have a look at an alternative federal budget.
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IS IT GOOD TO BE ALBERTA BOUND?
A new study says things might not be so rosy in B.C.’s neighbour to the east.
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B.C. New Democratic Premier Glen Clark and Alberta Conservative chief Ralph Klein (right) offer vastly different social and political visions.
FERNANDO PORTALES ILLUSTRATION

HEU marks International Women’s Day

march 8 women around the globe unite! international women’s day

CUPE B C I L I G N A M A R I C A
The fight for bread and roses in community social services

by Chris Allnutt

The government relies on contracted community social services agencies, both non-profit and fee-for-profit, to provide critical care services in our communities. However, the contracts do not include employment security or successorship rights. So when a group home is sold or closed, or a contract changes hands, care workers lose their jobs, and clients lose their access to consistent care. Collective agreements are out the window.

Despite repeated commitments from Victoria to close the wage gap for women in this sector, we’re still a long way from a fair settlement at the bargaining table.

That’s why we’ve chosen March 8, International Women’s Day, as a focal point for action to support community social services members’ bargaining demands for fairness.

Finally, there’s a disturbing rumour circulating that Victoria is going to hand over big blocks to for-profit doctors—the provinces highest-paid health professionals. If that turns out to be true, and the situation in community social services remains unresolved, frustration and anger could boil over.

So, as time marches toward International Women’s Day, HEU, along with our union partners, will continue the fight for bread and roses, for jobs and justice, towards a collective agreement for our community social services sisters and brothers.

Thank you HEU

On behalf of the nurses’ bargaining committee and the council and membership of the B.C. Nurses’ Union, I want to extend our sincerest thanks and appreciation to the members of HEU for the support you gave us during our recent job action.

Your understanding about our need to take the action we did, the support you demonstrated about the issues we raised, the messages of solidarity we received from our members on picket lines, in the media and in private conversation were all crucial factors in what we were able to achieve at the bargaining table.

We appreciate that many of you incurred some financial losses in supporting our picket lines while many of our members were required to offer essential services agreements to go into effect. Many of the difficulties that arose during our job action simply highlighted the problems besetting our health care facilities—increased acuity levels, crushing workloads, staff shortages—problems our bargaining and our job action were attempting to address.

I believe the efforts of both HEU and BCU in this bargaining year have produced some significant results toward alleviating some of these problems, to the benefit both of our patients and of our members.

Please be assured that the next time HEU members need our support in any future job action, the members of the B.C. Nurses’ Union will be there without reservation.

CATHY TERYSON, President

B.C. Nurses’ Union

Perfusional protest

I would like to respond to the misinformation being spread by HEU regarding the request by perfusionalists to be represented by the LRB to be recognized as paramedical professionals in early 1997.

The HEU opposed this application (with very weak arguments) knowing that such recognition would mean perfusionalists would become members of HEU.

After much stalling by the HEU and after passage of the Health Authorities Amendment Act in August 1997, LRB reversed its position and agreed that perfusionalists were indeed paramedical professionals.

HEU is now seeking to establish its right to represent perfusionalists by virtue of the legal rights acquired at the time of the perfusionalists’ original application to the LRB, and we have reason to believe that this application was an initiative of the perfusionalists of B.C. through the B.C. Society of Clinical Perfusionists.

Perfusionalists in B.C. know that they are and have always been paramedical professionals who have historically been misclassified in HEU rather than as the paramedical professional union (RPSA).

HEU’s request to be recognized as a paramedical professional union (RPSA) would recognize the professional status that perfusionalists have enjoyed in the past.

We believe the perfusionalists are a dedicated and experienced group of individuals who provide an essential service to the health care system.

We look forward to working with the perfusionalists and the LRB to negotiate a fair and just contract that recognizes their important role in the health care system.

We would like to thank all those who have supported our efforts to achieve this recognition.

Thank you.

Gavin Heffley

Pat on the Back

I chaired out of the local of the BOCEU and had the good fortune to receive a paper a few weeks ago: "Wonderful work, wonderful people. So many nice things I can say about the contents." Keep up the good work.

ANNE STREFOUL, President, UVIC

The Hospital Employees’ Union is the B.C. Health Services Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.
Registered nurses have agreement

Registered nurses voted 71 per cent in favour of ratifying the proposed contract on Jan. 22, with a 63 per cent turnout.

HEU members were out on the picket line to support BCUWU job action in late November and early December 1998.

The new agreement provides $50 million to hire 1,000 new full-time registered nurses over the next two years. BCUWU will be working in the months ahead to implement these provisions.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt says that HEU also looks forward to working with BCUWU to lobby for more care aides and LPNs for the nursing team.

"We all know that what would go a long way towards alleviating everyone's workload problems," he said. The HEUAC ratified the agreement by 90 per cent on Feb. 4.

Unions issue strike warning

Employer votes 100 per cent to lock out HEU

Representatives from HEU, HSA, CUPE and BCGEU stood in solidarity at a news conference Feb. 10 and warned that B.C. may be on the verge of its first-ever province-wide strike in community social services. The four unions also called on government negotiators to return to the bargaining table in an effort to head off job action set to begin March 8, International Women's Day. All four unions are currently bargaining for separate contracts with the Community Social Services Employers' Association and are cooperating on a global job action strategy.

"Together we are stronger," said HEU community social services bargaining committee chairperson and group home care-provider Marilyn Rust. "We are united. We are determined." In January, community social services employers voted 100 per cent in favour of locking out HEU care-providers at their work sites in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, Kootenays and Vancouver Island. At press time employers had still not announced a lockout date.

"Social services employers would rather lock us out than sit down and bargain a fair collective agreement," said Rust. "That's past time for Victoria to give CSSEA a mandate to close the wage and benefits gap rather than allowing them to send more negotiations.

"We'll be working hard to publicly unmask the employers' lockout strategy, and to stamp employers' claims that fair treatment for our members comes at the expense of their clients," said HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "Nothing could be further from the trust."

In mid-December, the 700 HEU care-providers directly impacted by these negotiations voted a resounding 97 per cent in favour of possible job action.

Foley's report flawed for HEU paramedics

HEU's Provincial Executive and Pro-
vincial Bargaining Committee are re-
mending rejection of Brian Foley's proposed terms of settlement between the paramedical bargaining association and the Health Employees Association of B.C.

The bargaining association, with HSA as the lead union, is recommend-
ing acceptance, but all the other mem-
bers of the association — HEU, CUPE, BCGEU, UPUCW and FEAG — are out, because some provisions would reduce home pay and undermine disability benefits for its members.

"As it stands, Foley's report shaves 1.75 per cent off paramedics' take-home pay to pay for an LLD plan that's on shaky ground," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. Currently HEU paramedics are covered by an employer-paid LLD plan.

"Our best information is that the LLD plan is badly underfunded," says Allnutt. "That undermines the ability of the trust to guarantee future disability benefits and may put the union in a position of liability for shortfalls in its financing.

HEU has joined with BCGEU, CUPE and FEAG in seeking expert opinion on the possible illegality of the proposal. On another note, language in the report would enable employers to reduce benefits for paramedics. "This concession is sure to be front and centre at facilities sector bargaining in 2001 if it becomes part of the paramedical collective agreement now," says Allnutt.
Her criticism's constructive
Without a secure place to live, people will not have access to good health care and education

by Dale Fuller

UDY GATYON rides her motor scooter through the streets of Nelson, where she is well-known for her outspoken advocacy for the underdog. But housing is her abiding passion.

"I first became involved as a co-op housing consultant in Regina in 1989 and have been a kind of housing missionary ever since," she says. "When I figured out the importance of housing to economic development and health and welfare and every other aspect of our society, I became kind of a book on the subject."

Gatyon is a consultant and advocate for non-profit rental housing for those who probably never will be in a position to own their own homes. For all intents and purposes, she says, there is nothing being built now. It's a luxury investment.

And the housing market is inexcusable. Homes are bought and sold over and over again at ever escalating prices after the initial construction costs have been paid.

"The money goes in the front door of a bank and out the back — right into the bottom line of some investor. It's not being used to pay for teachers, training, libraries; it sucks the life blood right out of our community," Gatyon says.

Her view is that the federal government needs to reinvest in non-profit housing, it saves money down the line and also generates benefits in health and welfare. She favours a capital gains tax on profits made on residential accommodation, to stop the spiraling cost of home ownership.

When she moved to Nelson 10 years ago, she jumped right into community activism. She's a city councillor but finds it frustrating. She is so involved with the housing issue that she often can't focus on what is most important to her. It would be considered a conflict of interest. So, she has to do some deep thinking before deciding whether or not to run in the next election.

She gained a certain amount of notoriety recently when she resigned from her post on the community health council after a dispute over the issue of turning over Mount St. Francis Hospital, a public-private partnership. She considers the health council to be almost a secret society. They say they want community input but use tactics like announcing meeting times and then changing them to in-camera sessions with no advance notice.

"Debra McLeod, the labour rep from HEU on the health council, is trying to get a resolution passed that meeting times cannot be changed without plenty of prior notice," she says.

Gatyon just became too frustrated with the level of debate on the council — she could tolerate it no longer.

"When I was aspiring against public-private-partnerships, they used this analogy: you're married to a guy who gives you no money to buy shoes, so you go out and buy your own."

Gatyon says, "Better to say it's your money, not his. What you do is send your child out to buy the shoes (real health, education and welfare) and when he comes back with a crooked heel (a nice old sandal), send him back to buy what you asked for in the first place."

She felt she would be more useful outside the council than dealing with people who use that sort of analogy to justify privatizing hospitals.

Gatyon served on the hospital and intermediate care boards (the predecessors to the community health council) for years prior to being appointed, and feels she has an in-depth understanding of health care issues. After asking for eight months if the budget would be balanced, and being told many times that yes, it would be, it turned out not to be true. "I would fire someone over that, but they said, 'whatcha gonna do?'"

Since resigning from the council, she attends all the meetings as a member of the public and Schultzes them with her questions.

Her day job "to support her housing habit" is as a career counselor. She runs a poverty workshop for the Ministry of Human Resources and sees about 190 people a week who need to go on welfare benefits. "I hear so many sad stories," she says.

One of her housing projects for artistic youth will open in May. She lives with her husband and five children; three of whom are special needs children and she and her husband have adopted.

• BALANCING IT ALL is a regular Guardian column about the challenges facing women activists.
WHAT WE'RE UP TO

the kids stickers saying “licensed practical nurse in training.”

More recently, Royal Columbian LPNs began their own campaign when they got wind of possible cutbacks. A visit to a health board meeting attracted coverage in the local television media. In Nelson, LPN Arvna Kooshin made a presentation to the health board on the role of LPNs. Thanks to HEU members, health boards are certainly getting an education on how LPNs fit into the nursing team!

Nilga’a negotiations moving forward

Negotiations for a first collective agreement to cover the 50 members in the Nilga’a Health Centre local opened last Dec. 10 and 11 between HEU and the Nilga’a Valley Health Board. This comes after a protracted struggle to maintain union certification, something the NVHB had challenged through the Canadian Labour Relations Board. Now, the union hopes to move forward and build upon the commitment Nilga’a tribal council president Joseph Gastell made at HEU’s 21st biennial convention in October 1998 regarding fair wages, benefits and working conditions for health care providers working on the reserve. Gastell said he would support any organization working for pay equity for First Nations people.

HEU members at this local deliver programs and services including those for newborns and children, pregnant and new mothers, youth and elders. Talks recommence March 4 to 5.

P3s uncorked in Nelson

A coalition of union and community activists is campaigning against the Nelson and Area Health Council’s consideration of a public-private partnership to replace the Mount St. Francis long-term care facility. And they’ve racked up a string of victories along the way.

Under pressure from the coalition, health council members agreed in December that a privately operated facility replacing the Mount was unacceptable. In early January, local MLA and cabinet minister Corky Evans also declared his opposition to a privately operated facility. But like many health council members, he is less clear about where an arrangement would build and then lease back the facility to the health council. “I think he’s confused,” says Eleanor Schmidt, an HEU activist and anti-P3 campaigner who met with Evans in early January. “He has no problem with the money being moved, but I don’t think he sees all the consequences.”

Schmidt says he community coalition will try to change his mind. They’ve launched a petition with the goal of collecting 3500 signatures. And they’re already half way there.

WCB report tips the scale for employers

Recommendations contained in the final installment of the WCB Royal Commission’s report would reward employers who are injuring health care workers in increasing numbers.

“The is shocking lack of balance in the recommendations of the Royal Commission,” says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. “While recognising the barriers faced by injured workers in their pursuit of WCB benefits, the Royal Commission report concrete recommendations take a clear aim at improved worker safety levels.”

Allnutt says the Royal Commission’s proposal to reduce WCB compensation rates from 75 per cent of gross earnings to 90 per cent of net earnings is completely unjustified in the face of a 7.5 per cent increase in injury rates in health care workplaces, B.C.’s most dangerous for on-the-job injuries.

“This scheme would reward health employers who have failed to provide safe workplaces while at the same time stealing benefits to injured health care workers,” says Allnutt.

HEU is also opposed to a proposed offer of WCB compensation by amounts received from the Canada Pension Plan.

“There is no justification for a paid by negligent employers on the pension plan distribution of workers and employers who’ve provided safe workplaces,” says Allnutt.

And while the Royal Commission has recommended steps to reduce the red tape workers face in the appeal process, Allnutt says the Royal Commission’s proposal to streamline appeals may actually deprive workers of their right to a fair hearing. “While HEU will work hard to make sure that any changes to WCB legislation promote safety at workplaces and protect benefits to injured workers.

According to WCB statistics, health care injury claims increased by over eight per cent between 1997 and 1998.

ON JAN. 26 VGH nursing unit clerks called an emergency meeting to talk about workplace stress and to listen to a slicer from medical records talk about how the restructuring in her department has resulted in staff cutbacks and why it has had a direct impact on unit clerks’ workload.

Priddy orders PCIS review

Public-private partnership at VGH is in trouble

by Mike Old

H

EALTH Minister Penny Priddy has directed the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board to review a public-private partnership that front-line workers say undermines patient care at the province’s biggest hospital.

Priddy’s action comes after a string of recent stories highlighted problems at Vancouver Hospital and Health Sciences Centre’s laboratory — the most recent revelation being that a new computer system failed to deliver anatomical pathology reports to some patient charts.

And though the hospital and the Ministry of Health investigated, various sources within HEU called on Priddy to carry out a broader audit of VHSIC’s Patient Care Information System (PCIS) — a $117 million public-private partnership between the hospital, B.C. Tel and the U.S. software firm Phamix Inc. with financing from the Royal Bank.

For years our union has been questioning the cost savings hospital managers projected as a result of PCIS implementation,” says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. “And we’ve been especially concerned that the project’s narrow focus on cost recovery through staff reductions would undermine quality assurance and patient care.

Now, as PCIS implementation enters its fifth year, those front-line staff in the lab and health records who’ve survived the cuts are feeling from increasing workload demands.

And while problems in the lab have had a high public profile, the crisis in health records is just as serious.

A study just completed by HEU documents how PCIS-driven staff reductions, and ill-conceived changes in work processes have led to missed, missing and incomplete charts, backlogs in meeting requests for patient information, thousands of unfiled loose reports and general disorder.

The situation in health records deteriorated to a point that staff walked off the job in October 1998.

“Priddy’s direction for a review of PCIS validates the concerns expressed by our members in health records,” says Allnutt.

“Finally, the clerical and technical staff who actually do the work will be consulted about changes to the hospitals information systems.

“At the same time, the review will give the broader health care community in the region an opportunity to assess the real costs of PCIS on patient care. Let’s in everybody’s interest to head off future crises at the hospital resulting from a failure to revisit PCIS implementation,” Allnutt says the review will help restore public confidence in one of Canada’s leading teaching and research hospitals.
PRESIDENT'S DESK

Democracy is more than just voting
by Fred Muzin

A
T THIS YEAR'S Harrison Winter School, Canadian Labour Congress president Bob White talked about how building a labour movement means setting aside ego and transcending the considerable pride and commitment we each feel for our individual unions. No one affiliate, whether public or private sector, can do it alone.

-Similarly, at a local level, the daily pressures of enforcing our contractual rights focuses us internally on servicing. We often neglect to strengthen our merged local, to educate our members, to make our structures more inclusive and to network with community groups and activists.

For the most part, local elections have now been completed and we have our leadership for 1999. As members, our responsibility doesn't end when we cast a ballot. What is equally important is for us to remain involved — to act the vision and strategic direction of our local and to work with its officers and stewards to achieve success.

The lack of a quorum at meetings endures democracy. It is simply not good enough to elect leaders, expect them to make the best possible guess at what we want, and then target them with criticism when they don't achieve what we never articulated. Democracy is hard work.

Now that most of our members are covered by three-year contracts, we have the opportunity and the resources to educate, re-energize, reach out to each other and define our agenda.

Grass roots members must understand that a corporate plan that demands the privatization of everything from health care, education, workers' compensation to even the supply of fresh water will prevent people from attaining economic justice and dignity. Governments that prefer tax reductions for the rich while child poverty and homelessness is rampant, that sell millions of dollars from unemployed workers and their communities, that prefer free trade to free people are morally bankrupt.

Members need to realize that, on the ground, the success of a conservative ideology ultimately means losing grievances.

It is time that the initiatives adopted by our convention delegates to make our more inclusive become better reflected in our workplaces. We complain that the demands of union activities are extreme, yet our members from equity groups such as the Ethnic Diversity, People with Disabilities, First Nations and Lesbians and Gay standing committees remain a tremendous source of unspent strength. Last year our disabled members were instrumental in helping the bargaining committee achieve improved LTD benefits for all. Lobbying by our members in the Lesbian and Gay standing committees resulted in improved access to adoption and pension rights.

We need to support each others' issues and grow.

We should consider opening up our local meetings to seniors' groups, students, environmental advocates, the poor, our sponsors/partners, our children and others. Our union should never be allowed to become an exclusive club or a secret society.

Our strength and ability to effect progressive change is rooted in the fundamental concept of solidarity at every level. Each of us gains when we are united.

NOTEBOOK

P3s bad medicine for seniors
by Mike Old

There's a critical need to provide more residential care beds for our growing seniors' population. Unfortunately, the NDP's care could do no more harm than good.

Here's the problem: two years ago, a review of capital spending carried out by Victoria concluded that public-private partnerships should be used to provide long-term care beds. Under these P3 schemes, a private company could build a facility and leave it back to a regional health authority who would operate it.

Alternatively, the private "partner" could actually build and operate the facility — ensuring their capital cost and funding their profit margin through operating subsidies from the public purse, diverting resources from direct patient care.

In either case, the attraction for delusional governments is that the capital costs of construction are no longer on the books. But it's a penny-wise, pound foolish approach that increases the long term costs to taxpayers. That's because government can borrow at significantly lower rates and pay this capital debt over a shorter period than the private sector. Under a P3 arrangement, government will cover the higher capital costs of the private company through lease fees or operating subsidies.

It's also a policy that imperils the characteristically public and non-profit nature of our continuing care system. In the Simon Fraser Health Region, for example, 75 per cent of residential care beds are public or non-profit and 25 per cent are in private, contracted facilities. If the government's P3 policy is applied to these facilities most desperately in need of repairs or replacement — the proportion would shift to 51 per cent private.

That would be a sad epitaph for an NDP government that prides itself as a defender of Medicare.

But cracks are starting to show in the P3 policy. In Nelson, an anti-P3 coalition has won declarations from local health council members and Agriculture Minister Barb MacIntosh that a "build and operate" P3 is an unacceptable option for replacing the Mount St. Francis long-term care facility. And in Kelowna and Nanaima, regional health boards have only a day to decide and one must assume reluctantly — sought expressions of interest for provision of residential care facilities under the P3 policy. That's a year after former health minister Joy MacPhail first announced these initiatives.

It's time for a new strategy to provide long-term care beds — one that empowers regional health authorities to more closely integrate care for seniors rather than forcing them to abandon ownership and control of residential care to the private sector.
Greed tops bill

by Margi Blamey

O

n Dec. 5, 1998, Cineplex Odeon (Sony) and Famous Players (Vscom) began locking out their 71 unionized projectionists, members of the B.C. Projectionists Union, Local 348 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). By Dec. 18 every theatre had locked out and ticket lines were up at 30 sites throughout B.C. in Victoria, Saanich, Prince Rupert, Prince George, Kelowna, Vernon, Kamloops, Clearbrook, Surrey, Langley, Delta, Richmond, Coquitlam, Burnaby, North Vancouver and Vancouver.

These two highly profitable corporations are demanding a 60 per cent wage cut among other concessions from the B.C. projectionists.

Sony, the parent company of Cineplex Odeon, earned $51.2 billion U.S. in the year ending March 1998, and Vscom, the owner of Famous Players, earned $13.3 billion U.S. in 1997. The concession demands are unnecessary, the only reason for them is uncontrolled corporate greed.

With so few members spread across the province, maintaining effective picket lines is impossible. Many theatres are open 12 or more hours a day, seven days a week.

"Only with the support of other unions will we be successful," said Local 348 president Damian Faulkner. "No one wants to see any employer get away with a 60 per cent wage cut. This is totally discretionary spending; it's a private corporation that makes a lot of profit."

Many sisters and brothers have thrown their support behind the projectionists since the first lockout. Most visible has been the turnout at three January rallies, called by the B.C. Federation of Labour, held on busy Friday and Saturday nights at Famous Players Silver City theatres in Richmond, Surrey and Coquitlam.

More targeted-theatre picket lines, bolstered by members from other unions, have been scheduled on high attendance days and on a rotating basis into March. When you go, make the labour solidarity clear - take your union support signs.

A mass "Rally Against Corporate Greed" is in the works for Feb. 27 in the Lower Mainland, with details to be announced closer to that time.

Support continues to grow as more people recognize the threat that the indefensible concession demands of Golijov Cineplex Odeon and Famous Players pose to all working people.

Forcibly rollback wages, benefits and working conditions to the lowest common denominator possible is what the projectionists are fighting and could happen to anyone anywhere at any time. HEU members can support the B.C. projectionists in their fight for fairness against Cineplex Odeon (Sony) and Famous Players (Vscom).

Give them your support lines and then walk with them.

Contact Cineplex Odeon and Famous Players and register your disgust over the lockouts and the concession demands.

Tell them you won't buy Sony products or patronize Blockbuster Video (Vscom).

* For further information about these actions and others, contact the B.C. Projectionists Union Local 348 in Vancouver at phone number (604) 683-0007 or fax number (604) 685-9558, or check their website at www.bcpjunion.com.

Anaesthetists strike in Poland

In early January the Polish government rejected demands of unionized anaesthetists whose protests over health care reforms have resulted in the closure of operating rooms across the country.

The anaesthetists' union reported approximately 1,800 of Poland's 2,700 specialists had resigned, although the government claims the number is much less. The mass resignations underscore the difficulty the government faces in pushing through changes to the medical system by introducing free market elements.

The anaesthetists are angry over the government's refusal to allow them to sign contracts directly with regional health funds (sowers) which are being set up under a sweeping health program that began Jan. 1, 1999.
Youth and experience combine on new executive

Delegates to HEU's recent convention chose six newcomers to join the incumbents on the union's executive council

The newcomers are

* Julie Amendt, Sandra Gray, Tony Gomes, Mary Nicholls, Donna Oandao and Laura Neil.

VGH maintenance supervisor Leo Bibo returns to the FE as 3rd vice-president after serving one term as regional vice-president for the Lower Mainland. He has been active in his local since the late 1970s, serving as vice-chair, trustee, warden, conductor, shop steward and chair. He graduated from HEU's first-ever summer school and bought a holding office in his late 20s. He has served on many committees over the years. Bibo is a firm believer in grass roots activism and as such, was recently elected to the post of vice-chair from which he says he can be there to help VGH local's new chair.

Nanaimo long-term care aide Dan Hingley jumps from 2nd member-at-large to 4th vice-president in his second term on the FE. He has been a local activist since 1993 as secretary-treasurer, a rep on the CHUM committee and a shop steward — and is currently chair. He's the union rep on the Central Vancouver Island Regional Health Board and sits on the local executive board. "Our local and our activists must continue to be united and work towards future security for ourselves and other working people.

President

Fred Muzin returns for a third full term as president and one of the union's three full-time officers. A biomedical electronics technologist from St. Paul's Hospital since 1977, Muzin was on his local executive for 11 years and was first elected to the FE and provincial bargaining committee in 1986, serving as 3rd vice-president for two terms until he was elected 1st vice-president in 1992. He is currently HEU's officer at the B.C. Federation of Labour and sits on the national executives of CLAC and the Canadian Health Coalition. Muzin's priorities this term are to help develop the Provincial Executive as an accountable and accessible body, to move up the locals, to reinvigorate the membership in the struggle, and to continue to contribute to social justice and one contract for HEU members.

Secretary-Business Manager

Chris Allant was confirmed for this position for the second time at the 1998 convention. He originally assumed office when Carmela Allatt stepped down in 1996. Before that he was HEU's assistant secretary-business manager for six years and a senior research analyst for one year. He came to HEU after working as a researcher for the B.C. Nurses' Union, the Management and Professional Employees' Society and the Trade Union Research Bureau. He started young as a student activist in his university days. "If this is the last time I work, I hope to make changes and make our union stronger." He adds that he will look to his future work on our short-term goals and make the necessary changes to make our union stronger.

Vice-Presidents

David Ridley returns for a third term as 1st vice-president. A biomedical technologist at Victoria's Royal Jubilee Hospital, Ridley has held several positions in his own local and is the union appointee to the Capital Health Regional Board. His priorities for the next two years are to encourage locals to resist the increasing pressure by employers to form public-private partnerships, to ensure all of our members achieve a fair collective agreement and work with our staff to provide a challenging and fulfilling employment environment within HEU.

Colleen Fitzpatrick, an accounting clerk at Prince Rupert Regional Hospital, is 2nd vice-president for the second time. By the time she was elected to the last FE, she had already logged many years as senior trustee and senior trustee elect and was on the 1998 to 2000 bargaining committee. She served her local as chair, warden, shop steward and vice-chair and was a Prince Rupert Labour Council delegate. She is the labour rep on the region's community health council. A new group which prepares women to run for city council is another activity which claims some of her time. During the next two years Fitzpatrick sees her work on the FE as building on the union's strengths as well as addressing its weaknesses for a better tomorrow while meeting today's challenges.

Trustees

Housekeeping aide Linda Hargraves steps into the position of senior trustee to replace Della McLeod. She has been on the FE since 1992, and has served as a regional trustee and vice-president for Vancouver Island for two terms. She sits on the pay equity, comparability and the international solidarity committees, and she served on the board of co-ops where she said was her last term in office. She is vice-president of the Trade Union Group (TUG), which also deals with international solidarity issues. Hargraves was first elected to office in the Cumberland Health Centre local in 1983 and has served as secretary-treasurer, vice-chair, warden and chair of the board. She is currently assistant secretary-treasurer and shop steward. She says she is also on the union's political action committee. From 1988 to 1995 Hargraves was a seatfighter for the Campbell River, Courtenay and District Labour Council and is now trustee of that body. She was a councillor in the village of Cumberland from 1990 to 1996 and president of the Comox Valley NDP. She is interested in the past of her community, she is a director of the Cumberland Historical Society and is a Miners' Memorial Day organizer. She wants to see the FE change the way it does business by talking more to the membership.

Surrey Memorial accounting clerk Julie Amendt is the new senior trustee-elect on the FE. This is not her first time in that position — she served from 1988 to 1992.
Chris Allnutt, Mary LaPlante and Fred Muzin remain at the helm of the union.

HULL

HUNTER

HUMBLE

HUNTSWELL

HARGREAVES

SMITH

and in 1994 in the same office. She was not on the last FE, but she has also been regional vice-president for the Lower Mainland (Vancouver). She has also served on three provincial bargaining committees. Amendt was first elected to her local executive in 1976. She has been conductor, vice-chair, secretary-treasurer, trustee and shop steward and sat on the political action and women's committees. She says her 13-year-old son keeps her very busy. She is involved in the community and is a member of the United Way board and is involved in the municipal coalition and school board activities.

From the position of 5th vice-president, Maurice Smith goes to being the FE's trustee. He works at Burnaby Hospital as a store worker and is a veteran of the FE. Since 1978 he has served as financial secretary, member-at-large and 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th vice-presidents. He was chair of his local for 20 years, and also was in charge of all the above positions. He is a strong supporter of the union and community programs.

Members-at-Large

A bed-bucking clerk at Children's and Women's Hospital, Louise Hutchinson was a trustee on the last FE, and she will serve for the next two years as a member-at-large. She began her activism at the local level in 1980 and has been vice-chair, chief shop steward, trustee, secretary-treasurer and OH&S representative. She designed and instructed the course “Healing Your Activist Heart” for the B.C. Federation of Labour/Simon Fraser Labour Studies program. Hutchinson is one of the founders of HEU's gay and lesbian caucus.

Kwown General Hospital cook Ken Robinson was also on the last FE in another position—regional vice-president for the Okanagan. Now a member-at-large, he was first elected to his local executive in 1992 on which he served as assistant secretary-treasurer, senior trustee and vice-chair. He has served as recording secretary of the Okanagan and District Labour Council. Robinson thinks that it is vitally important that the FE and all HEU members work to preserve the quality of our national medical system.

Regional Vice-Presidents

Iriss Reamshottom is beginning her second term on the FE as regional vice-president for the Fraser Valley. She is a medical imaging clerk at Maple Ridge/Bridge Meadows Hospital. As chair of HEU's political action committee, she was also the union's representative on the B.C. Federation of Labour political action committee. And she is on HEU's women's committee. Her involvement at the local level goes back many years. She served as chair for eight years and as secretary, shop steward as a member or officer of the labour adjustment, OH&S and tri-union labour adjustment committees. She was recently elected for the two-year position of trustee. An active member of her community as well, Reamshottom is a school trustee in District 42, sits on the Maple Ridge Social Planning Advisory Committee and the Maple Ridge Advisory Committee on Accessibility Issues. She is also on the NDP's Women's Rights Executive. Reamshottom looks forward to serving on the new FE and says, "As we move towards the year 2000, I want to work with the union to promote our social, political and economic policies that can benefit our communities.

Sandra Gray, regional vice-president for the Kootenays, is a licensed practical nurse who works as a care aide at FW Green in Cranbrook. At a first-time FE member, she has been a member of HEU for five years. She started out as a union activist — CLPE — in Fernie, where she worked in long-term care. She says she has been on the local executive for four years and has held every position except secretary-treasurer and currently holds the double position of chair and chief shop steward. Gray has also been on the labour adjustment, labour management and grievance committees. And she is soon to become part of the OH&S committee at FW Green. She wants to have as much contact as possible with HEU members while she is on the executive. I want the membership to be able to put a face to the names and titles," she says. "We need to go to our FE meetings, but we need to be out there where people can see us and talk to us."

Den Allen works as an attendant in the transportation department at Burnaby Hospital and is returning to a second term as vice-president for the Centennial region. He served his first term on the FE from 1992 to 1994, when employment security provisions were first brought into the collective agreement. Allen has been a member of the provincial bargaining committees twice, first in 1996 and again in 1998. He has been an activist since 1980 when he was a shop steward of the Burnaby local, and has served in every position on the local executive. He is also on many committees of the local. He is on the Westminster and District Labour Council executive as member-at-large and sits on the B.C. Union, Liberal Tradex Council executive. In his community, he asked in the creation of his neighborhood CHC and attends the Vancouver/Richmond and Simon Fraser Health Board meetings. At Carnegie Centre he assists an AIDS/HIV/AIDS support group. Allen hopes to be accessible to HEU members in the Centennial region. I want to especially assist in building stronger, more organized local, he says.

First time FE member Tony Gomes is an accounting supervisor at Royal Family Hospital and he is the new regional vice-president for the Lower Mainland/Columbia region. He has been chair and trustee of his local as well as serving on the labour adjustment committee. He was on the resolutions committee for the 1998 convention and attended the Harrison Hot Springs winter school in 1990. His goal on the FE is to ensure that the members' voice is heard at the FE level.

Clearer Kelly Knox begins her second term as Lower Mainland Coastal vice-president. He is the Paul local, where he currently serves as vice-chair. First elected to the local executive in 1991, he has also been chief shop steward, harassment advisor and council. Other union-related work includes OH&S and Vancouver and District Labour Council. Knox sees a lot of work ahead of him to keep the regional FE up and running. He says, "I hope that HEU's provincial OH&S committee can get information out to our members so we can really use and access that agency."

Mills Memorial Hospital LPN and activity worker Mary Nicholls is the new regional vice-president for the North. This is her first time on the FE. She is in her second term as the chair of her local and third term as shop steward. Nicholls has been on the labour adjustment and the union management committees at her facility for three terms. A strong advocate for LPNs in her local, she is also a director of the College of LPNs and a member of the union management committee at her facility to improve nursing team work. She volunteers at the Salvation Army and used to be an executive member of Terrace minor baseball and hockey Providing grass roots activists with the resources they need is what she would like to see happen while she is on the FE.

Royal Inland Hospital pharmacy technician Domina Bernardo is sitting for the first time on the FE as the regional vice-president for the Okanagan. She has been chair of her local since 1992 and was elected for the first time to her executive in 1991. She has served as chair of chief shop steward and the HEU regional liaison for the Thompson valley. She represents her local at all labour council meetings.

Royal Jubilee unit chair Laura Neil is the new regional vice-president for Vancouver Island. This is her first term on the FE. She was a member of the 1997-1998 bargaining committee. Neil has served on her local as conductor (vice) and secretary-treasurer, and chair and assistant chair of her faculty's essential service committee. She was chair of the social committee and was a labour council delegate. She is very active in her community as a marching band director. She is also the director of the Prospect Lake Community Association. She is also an instructor in the unit clerk course at Camosun College. Neil looks forward to the next two years. "My priority for the new millennium will be to see a resurgence of the grassroots membership facilitator, the Political Executive through education, participation, accessibility and accountability," she said.

January / February 1999 | Guardian 9
CUPE women fight to keep services public

by Louise Hutchinson

In mid-November—approximately 400 CUPE activists gathered in Ottawa for the fifth CUPE National Women's Conference, the first in six years.

The goal of the conference was to share our experiences and formulate an action plan putting women and equality issues at the forefront of CUPE's fightback campaign against privatization.

Women discussed the impact of cuts to public sector jobs and the devastating effects on public services at the expense of profit. More often than not, women pick up the extra burden at home as health care, education and social services are cut in their communities.

There is more stress at work due to loss of hours, layoffs and privatization.

Judy Darcy, CUPE National president, reminded participants that 60 per cent of CUPE members are women. Twelve HUS women attended the conference. They all return to their local with information on how restructuring affects women's paid work, globalization, historical gains in the union movement, strategies for organizing women workers, anti-privatization campaigns, organizing the organized, fostering women's leadership and on how to set up a women's committee in the workplace.

Participants marched to Finance Minister Paul Martin's office and attempted to serve him with a $4 billion bill on behalf of CUPE and PSAC strikers who are not receiving their pay equity money.

Hutchinson is a member-at-large of the Provincial Executive and co-chair of CUPE National Women's Committee.

Privatization not in Canada's interest, says CUPE report

The country's first-ever annual report on privatization concludes that Canadians pay a hefty price when private corporations gain control of public services.

\[\text{Hustle Takeover: Annual Report on Privatization documents the devastating effects of the government's sell-off of public services.}\]

\[\begin{array}{l}
\text{The CUPE report sounds the alarm about quality, safety, access and accountability for Canada's hospitals, schools and water systems.} \\
\text{Darcy came to Vancouver on January 22 on the final stop of a cross-country tour to release the report.} \\
\text{Her tour focused public attention on the myth that private is better, re-igniting the debate about privatization.} \\
\text{"Look what happens when our services are turned into profit-making corporate ventures. Greedy owners bankrupted three seniors care facilities in the province last year. That interrupted care for vulnerable seniors and robbed caregivers of decent jobs and back wages," said Darcy.} \\
\text{"The government cut $77 million from municipal operating budgets. At the same time they've changed the law to allow municipalities to privatize or contract out services. It's a direct attack on services at the heart of our communities, including food, garbage collection, and recycling programs," she said.} \\
\text{The report cites polling on Canadians' views about privatization, and shows three quarters of them have grave concerns about it.} \\
\text{People in this country oppose privatized water supplies by a margin of five to one.} \\
\text{The full report is available at www.cupe.ca.} \\
\end{array}\]

Anti-poverty groups go to Geneva

The delegation made the trek to expose Canada's shameful treatment of its poor

by Dale Faller

Social justice groups from Canada made the trek to Geneva, Switzerland in December last year to make presentations to the United Nations Commission on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the plight of poor people in this country. The government of Canada made its own presentation.

The committee's mandate is to monitor compliance with the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Canada has been a signatory since 1976. The committee's conclusion is that Canada was not adequate to its obligations.

In fact, Canada's government received its harshest-ever criticism from the committee. It listed its concerns in the 11-page report. The implied question, "How can there be so much increasing poverty in such a wealthy country as Canada?" was interspersed throughout the report.

Like a schoolteacher scolding an inattentive youngster, the UN committee made some powerful recommendations to Canada on how to confront its problems:

Among them were:
- restore national programs of transfer payments for social programs with universal entitlements and enforceable standards;
- enact the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, ensuring respect for First Nations' measures so they can sustain their cultures and economies;
- protect poor children by prohibiting provinces from deducting family allowances from social assistance entitlements;
- reform EI to provide enough coverage for an adequate duration for all workers if they lose their jobs;
- recognize homelessness as the national emergency it is by reiterating the federal government's social housing program, increasing shelter allowances and setting levels and protecting affordable rental housing stock;
- make education more accessible to low-income students;
- pay women equally for work of equal value, and add women and children's poverty by concentrating on affordable child care, women's shelters and legal aid for family matters.

Jacqueline Ackery represented B.C.'s End Legitimated Poverty, one of the nine Canadian non-governmental organizations to make presentations in Geneva.

"The committee made it clear that Canada is falling woefully in living up to its international obligations," she said upon her return.

In Ackery's opinion, Canada must either repair the damage that has been done to its social safety nets and therefore regain its place in the world as a defence of universal human rights or admit that it no longer belongs there.

"I believe that, in the end, Canada will choose to save face. And that is why I went to Geneva," she said.

What the U.N. covenant says

The U.N. Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was approved by the U.N. in New York in 1966 and took effect in 1976. It was signed by 137 countries, including Canada.

Parties to the covenant:
- recognize the right of everyone to earn a living by freely choosing and accepting the appropriate steps to safeguard this right;
- undertake to ensure the right of everyone to freedom from trade union and association without state interference;
- protect the right to education by taking effective steps to make education accessible to all people, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. For example, The Long Term, publication of End Legitimated Poverty.
Comparability settlement is in our sights

Arbitrator Stephen Kelleher has called for "finality" in the process of determining comparability between HREU members in the facilities sector and BCEGU members who carry out similar work in direct government service. And he set Feb. 27 as the date when all outstanding issues in the long-standing comparability process will be heard.

In a ruling handed down Jan. 22, his third on comparability since May 1997, Kelleher again rejected employer efforts to block HEU’s claim for comparability payments to members as first set out in the 1991 facilities master agreement. In fact, Kelleher’s conclusions on several key comparability issues will assist HEU in obtaining fair compensation for members in the final leg of the comparability process.

Kelleher says that HEU members receiving payments should not bear the cost of the long wait for comparability. He rules that interest should be paid on comparability payments retroactive to July 1, 1996.

And Kelleher ruled against health employers’ argument that comparability was limited by government compensation guidelines set out by the Public Sector Employers’ Council.

Kelleher has directed the parties to consider the following factors in finalizing comparability: wage differences at April 1, 1996; differences in job security; differences in working hours and differences in working conditions — including hours of work.

"It’s been a long wait for our members," said HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "But it finally looks like we’re coming to the end of our struggle to achieve comparability."
Stop the presses!

Finance Minister Paul Martin tabled his "health care budget" February 16 and it contains some welcome — if limited — relief for B.C.'s beleaguered health care system. The budget boosts transfer payments for health care by $2 billion annually in the first two years and up to $2.5 billion for the following three. That could amount to a $240 million shot in the arm for B.C.'s health care system in the upcoming year.

And while its positive news, it only begins to make up for the cuts to health care that Martin began in 1995. Under the federal five-year spending program, B.C. will be receiving the same level of transfer payments in 2004 as in 1995. That level of contribution begins to pale in the face of increasing costs on health care, like inflation, a growing and aging population, and increasingly expensive pharmaceuticals and medical technologies.

The fifth Alternative Federal Budget urges the federal government to take VITAL MEASURES

The Fifth Alternative Federal Budget, launched in Vancouver by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the B.C. Health Coalition, says vital measures are needed to resuscitate Canada's ailing health care system and improve the social and economic well-being of Canadians.

The AFB proposes an additional public investment in Medicare of $2 billion in 1999, and $4 billion per year over the next five years. The budget also dedicates $2 billion for a public home care program and $500 million for the phasing in of a national Pharmacare plan. Based on the current distribution of federal transfer payments, the AFB proposals could inject an additional $500 million into B.C.'s health care system.

"It's a plan that would relieve the pressure on health care from lines in B.C.," says HOPE president Fred Mauzy. "And it's a fiscal commitment that would turn back the threat of a two-tier health care system, while strengthening the authority of the federal government to enforce the principles of the Canada Health Act."

"Our budget will protect and improve the health of Canadians not only by reinvesting in Medicare, but also by addressing the root causes of poor health — unemployment, poverty, inequality, lack of access to education and environmental pollution," said Seth Klein, director of CCPA's B.C. office. "Through measures to fight poverty, provide adequate housing and secure pensions, the AFB would improve the health outcomes of Canadians."

Under the AFB plan, validated by the independent economic forecasting firm Informetrica, the unemployment rate falls below six per cent by 2001 and the poverty rate is reduced from 18 per cent to 12 per cent in four years. This is accomplished at the same time as the budget is balanced and the overall federal tax-to-GDP ratio remains constant.

"The federal government is poised to reap huge budget surpluses over the next two years," said Klein. "Using the surplus to pay down the debt or cut taxes at this time is pure folly. With continuing global financial instability, it's critical the surplus be spent on public programs to stimulate job creation and economic growth here in Canada."

The AFB increases core program spending by $13 billion in 1999 and increases unemployment insurance benefits by $6 billion. "The federal government has balanced the books on the backs of the unemployed," said Klein. "Cutting unemployment insurance benefits accounts for half the total cut in programs spending in recent years. Our budget restores and improves benefits to the hundreds of thousands of unemployed Canadians who have paid premiums but have been shut out of the system."

The Alternative Federal Budget, now in its fifth year, is coordinated by the CCPA and the Winnipeg-based Coalition of Concerned Canadians. It's available on the Internet at http://www.policyalternatives.ca.

Workers 'left out in the cold' As part of an ongoing, national campaign to pressure the federal government to improve the Employment Insurance system, the Canadian Labour Congress commissioned Left Out in the Cold: The End of UI Coverage for Canadian Workers, a report that details the collapse of UI coverage and the plight of unemployed workers in Canada.

Based on Statistic Canada figures, Left Out in the Cold graphically details how changes to UI see affecting coverage for the unemployed across the country. It provides data on the percentage of unemployed who receive UI and breaks the data down by city, UI region, and federal riding.

Nationaliy, only 36 per cent of the unemployed qualify for benefits under current rules — less than half of those who qualified in 1989. In Vancouver, only 26 per cent now qualify.

Many women, community and church organizations, anti-poverty groups, unions and other social justice-seeking proponents are pressing the federal government to use the EI system to improve benefits and coverage of the unemployed.

The CLC is putting to use at least 70 per cent of unemployed workers covered and for claimants to receive at least 80 per cent of their weekly pay.

VANCOUVER NDP MP Libby Davies joined community and labour activists at a CLC/Vancouver and District Labour Council rally outside Vancouver Centre Liberal MP Hedy Fry's constituency office — staged to pressure the federal government for better UI benefits and coverage.

Source: Canadian Labour Congress

Federal share of total public/private health spending (impact of AFB proposals for cash transfers)

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<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
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Source: Canadian Labour Congress

Workers 'left out in the cold' As part of an ongoing, national campaign to press

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A Tale of Two Provinces

The mainstream media and the business lobby have made much of the so-called "Alberta Advantage"—that province's strong economic growth and relatively low unemployment.

But according to a new study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Alberta-based Parkland Institute, the "Alberta Advantage" is an illusion for most people.

A Tale of Two Provinces: A Comparative Study of Economic and Social Conditions in British Columbia and Alberta goes beyond the headlines to examine what has happened to public services in both provinces, who has benefited from the economic growth in Alberta and identifies the sources of Alberta's recent growth and B.C.'s recent economic downturn.

"Except for the wealthier end of the residents, what people save in taxes in Alberta they lose in reduced public services and new out-of-pocket expenses," says Seth Klein, director of the CCPA's B.C. office and co-author of the report.

"Health, education and welfare all receive less public funding in Alberta than in B.C.

"Funding for public programs in Alberta, which at one time was among the highest in Canada, is now at or below levels in the poorest Atlantic provinces." Alberta now spends more per capita on private health care expenditures, more in post-secondary tuition, and sends more to the government in the form of lottery and gambling expenditures.

And the "Alberta Advantage" as it relates to the job market withers under closer inspection.

The study shows that while both provinces need to do more to fight unconscionably high rates of poverty, the rate of poverty among children of single mothers in Alberta is 71.4 per cent as compared to B.C.'s rate of 58.6 per cent.

A key finding of the study is that both Alberta and B.C. remain too dependent on the export of primary resource commodities. Alberta, however, is more dependent on the resource sector, and is becoming more so. The study concludes that Alberta's growth has been export-led, driven by oil and gas exports to the U.S. market.

"The Alberta Advantage is not a product of lower taxes and budget surpluses," says Klein. "Rather, Alberta's growth results from the real Alberta advantage: oil and gas."

The Cost of Cutbacks

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<th>Summary of cost and service comparisons for a two-income family of four with an average family income of $55,000</th>
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<td>Total direct provincial and federal taxes, 1998</td>
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<td>Public health care expenditures per capita, 1997 (estimate)</td>
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<td>Private health care expenditures per capita, 1997 (estimate)</td>
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<td>Public education spending per pupil (K-12), 1997 (estimate)</td>
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<td>Public post-secondary spending per capita, 96-97</td>
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<td>Average university tuition, undergraduate arts &amp; science program, 97-98</td>
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<td>Average college tuition, academic program, 97-98</td>
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<td>Government revenues from lotteries and gambling per capita, 96-97</td>
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A Tale of Two Provinces is available from the CCPA—B.C. office at (604) 901-5121 or e-mail cpabc@ctnouch.ca

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 1999 • GUARDIAN 13
AMERICANS SEEK REFUGE FROM PERSECUTION

by Dale Fuller

LAN MAKI is an American citizen who came to Canada with his family in 1990 after his 10-year-old son was shot at as he waited for a school bus. This was not a random act of violence, and it was not the first time that it happened. Now the Canadian government wants to send them back.

Canada is a place of refuge to many people from around the world, but what to do with a man and his family who are from the United States and are claiming to be political refugees?

As a youth, Maki was involved in the civil rights movement and anti-Vietnam war activities. Documents released under the American Freedom of Information Act show that the Federal Bureau of Investigation began spying on him when he was 17 years old.

He believes his campaign for the repeal of the Communist Control Act and the National Security Act attracted the notice of the FBI and right-wing fanatics. He contends that the FBI has hidden behind these acts to spy upon and harass American citizens. His family became the object of harassment, culminating in the attack on his son.

"Many people do not see, nor understand, this side of life in the United States of America," says Maki.

The family hurriedly entered Canada, fearful for their children's lives. They bought some land in Manitoba where Maki made a modest living trapping.

He became active in the Manitoba Trapper's Association, and his wife Carol in the local parent's advisory council.

The kids enrolled in school, and the family became an integral part of the community.

Everything changed when Maki wrote an article in a trapper's newsletter condemning anti-First Nations racism in the fur trade.

Soon after that, representatives from the local RCMP detachment and Canadian Immigration presented Maki with a deportation order, saying that the family was in Canada illegally.

"We have not denied this, but there are extenuating circumstances," says Maki.

The community has rallied to the support of the Maki's, who have applied for political refugee status in Canada.

The Department of Immigration has granted a hearing, but much of the evidence needed to prove their case is being withheld by the FBI. And the Canadian government refuses to put any pressure on the Americans to open their borders.

"Our lives would be in jeopardy should we be returned to the United States," the Maki's contend. Visit their website at www.interlog.com/~makii for more information.

COMING IN FROM THE COLD

This winter, HIV gave many new members a warm welcome. The community social services sector grew by a total of 257 – from Kariell Consulting Services in Victoria, Nanseta House in Nanaimo, Calm House and Greendale House on Vancouver Island and Salt Spring Island Community Services Society. And there are now two new HIV-related paramedics at Prince George's Simon Fraser Lodge. In the independent category, 52 employees from the private, fee-for-service caregivers, Waverly in Chilliwack, and 30 security officers at VGH are new HIV members. Finally, 13 volunteers at the Mercedes Guest Home in Abbotsford will become part of the HIV facilities sub-sector once the new owner, HRABC, membership has been activated.

COFFEE BREAK

A regular union Joe

Tim Forneris, the groundskeeper who chased down Mark McCarren's recalcitrant 62nd home run ball, returned the ball to the St. Louis Cardinals slugger rather than trying to make money off it.

"It's not mine to begin with," said Forneris. "McCarren lost it, and I brought it home. I'm just a regular Joe."

Forneris is a member of the Service Employees International Union Local 90. McGwire gave Forneris a pile of baseball memorabilia for the baseball- Forneris' family, including groundkeeper brother Tim and stadium concierge brother Bill, both SEIU members, got lifetime passes to the baseball Hall of Fame.

A good idea

This exchange was recorded in a reporter's interview with the late peace-activist, Mahatma Gandhi: Reporter: Mr. Gandhi, what do you think of Western division?

Gandhi: I think it would be a good idea.

Odd signs from England

In a London restaurant: Automatic washing machines, please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

On a drugstore's window: Anyone leaving their garments here for more than 30 days will be disposed of.

In a safari park: Elephants please stay in your car.

On a repair shop door: We can repair anything. (Please knock hard, the bell doesn't work.)

In a department store: Basement sale upstairs.

Y2K? -

If Julius Caesar were alive today, he would be dating his 1999 cheque Y2KCC.

According to Brian Rose, a professor of classical architecture at the University of Cincinnati, modern users of Roman numerals must agree on either MDCCC or MDCCL, a headache known as the Y2K problem.

It's the law

As a rule, rules are made to be broken. However, the rules of Chocolate should be strictly followed:

1. Chocolate-covered raisins, cherries, orange slices and strawberries, all count as fruit, so eat as many as you want.
Alleging with good-byes from many well-wishers comes a great deal of gratitude and appreciation, too, brother.

**Getting to know us**

The lively, new smile in the Provincial Office belongs to librarian, Jose Serran, who became HEU's newest permanent staff person this January. Originally from South Africa, Jose and her spouse immigrated to Canada via the U.S. in 1995. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this position, but claims that skill at a steep learning curve that includes all our names.

**In memoriam**

Shirley Blackburn

Since Shirley Blackburn died suddenly on Oct. 14, 1998, Shirley had been working at Vancouver's Columbia Residence for eight years and at the time of her death was secretary-treasurer of the local. She is greatly missed by her sisters and brothers.

**In memoriam**

Raymond McCreedy

On Dec. 22, 1998, former HEU business manager (1968-1979) and dedicated unionist, brother, Raymond McCreedy died in Vancouver. He had been with HEU since the early 1960s and was an active member until his retirement in 1967. Throughout his life, he held integrity, honour and kindness above all else. He is lovingly remembered by family, friends and business associates.

**In memoriam**

William Rolfe

Brother Bill Rolfe, longtime HEU staff person, died on Dec. 6 in Vancouver. Bill was a long-standing member and staff member, whose heart and how he put others needs ahead of his own. His work on WCB claims and benefits kept him in touch with HEU members, who were among the people he most loved to serve. Bill was greatly honored by family and friends at a service on Dec. 11.

**In memoriam**

David Todd

Brother David Todd died unexpectedly Jan. 5 in Victoria. Family, friends, colleagues and clients remember and greatly miss his scientific sense of humour, his kindliness, his delight in his work and his love of his four children.

**In memoriam**

Val Marie Corbett

HEU sister Val Corbett died at Prince Rupert on Jan. 24. She worked for the past 11 years in the dietary department of the Prince Rupert Regional Hospital. Her laughter and love of life was well-known to all and she will be fondly remembered by her family and many friends.

**FOR INQUIRIES ON LONG-TERM DISABILITY**

HEU members can call toll-free: Health Care Benefits Trust: 1-888-736-2087

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**Press 2**

First Nations

First Nations members would like to hear from you! Please call if you would like to help educate our union and everyone on issues that affect First Nations people.

**Press 3**

Lesbians and Gays

For support or if you are committed to being identified, please call. We want to know your rights. Call for information on same sex benefits, fighting homophobia and discrimination.

**Press 4**

People with disabilities

Let us hear from you. If you are on WCB or LTD, or if you are invisibly disabled in the workplace, let us know how the union can better meet your needs.

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**ALL CALLS ARE CONFIDENTIAL**

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* A nice box of chocolates can provide your total daily intake of calories in one place.
* Chocolate has many preservatives. Preservatives make you look younger.
* If you can't eat all your chocolates, they will keep in the freezer.
* If you can't eat all your chocolates, they're wrong with you.
* Put "best chocolate" at the top of your list of things to do today. That way, at least you'll get one thing done.

That's cold, brother

Southern columnist Andrew Coyne defended merchants accused of profiting by raising prices, sharply after the 1998 ice storm in Ontario and Quebec, saying they were merely "performing the vital social function of allocating scarce resources among competing users."

"If it weren't for the 'free market' -- what goods would be allocated in much more haphazard, inefficient and unjust ways, he said."

**Comparing Nike pay cheques**

It takes a Nike shoe worker in Vietnam 11 hours and 42 minutes to earn enough money to buy a kilo of chicken. A minimum wage worker in the U.S. can buy the same amount of chicken after just 41 minutes of work.

Michael Jordan, the world's best basketball player, makes enough to buy that chicken in just seven seconds of a second. And that's just from his salary with the Chicago Bulls, not the additional $47 million a year he gets from Nike and other companies endorsement conracts.

We hope Jordan will follow through with his last year's pledge to visit Nike factories in Asia, especially now that he's retired.

**High hopes**

Will Watson, the chronic shortage of Roman Catholic priests has prompted the local archdiocese to buy billboard ads that say: Enjoy the Ultimate Benefits Package. Consider Priesthood.

**Listen to us**

How concerned are Canadians about health care? In a late-January Angus Reid poll, health care was cited by 43 per cent of respondents as the single issue warranting greatest attention from Canada's political leaders.

Most interesting is the extent to which the concern is escalating. Last July, 28 per cent cited health care as their top concern, up from 17 per cent in January 1990.

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*HEU people*

Congratulations X 2

Congratulations to Raj Choshun, our HEU brother and staff member, on two recent appointments: his re-appointment as the director for the WCB/Disability department in the HEU Provincial Office and his re-appointment as a member of the provincial Labour Relations Board.

Always part of the family

Warmest wishes to brother Dave Williams, long-time HEU servicing rep. and lifelong brother, on his retirement.

Dave has been part of the HEU for more than 20 years, first as a local officer, then a PE member, and since 1975, a staff person in the Victoria regional office.

**HEU'S CONFIDENTIAL HUMAN RIGHTS HARRASSMENT PROCESS**

COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATIONS can help if you are being harassed at work because of:
* sex (including sexual harassment)
* race
* sexual orientation
* disability
* religion (see BC 468 of the Tobacco Sector Agreement)

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call for a recorded message about the process.
Stop the Tide of Privatization

Public Works!

Canadian Union of Public Employees

Does not compute
Health minister orders review of VGH's computerized patient health care information system.

Public works!
CUPE report shows the price is too high when corporations gain control of public services.

UI for jobless
While unemployed workers struggle to survive, the federal government gorges itself on their money.

Fighting deportation
Alan Maki and his family claim to be political refugees – from the United States.