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Guardian



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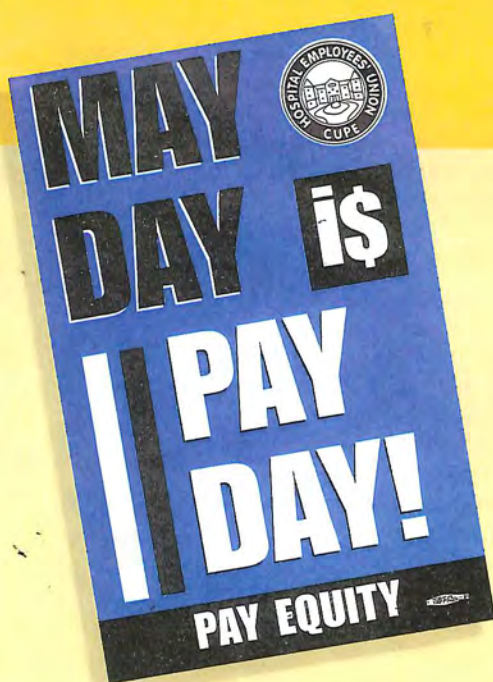
THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

APRIL/MAY 2000



CHOOSE WITH CARE

BIG BUSINESS HAS BIG
PLANS FOR B.C.
AND THEY'RE NOT IN
WORKERS' INTERESTS.
PAGE 8



**A VICTORY TO
CELEBRATE!**

Comparability
passes its last
hurdle. PAGE 3

The Guardian's

It's a record of HEU's history. PAGE 10

50!



COMMENT

Celebrate pay equity victory, but prepare for more work

by Chris Allnutt



IT IS TIME for HEU members to celebrate a tremendous achievement. Due to their efforts and hard work over the years, the union has come to an agreement with the Health Employers Association of B.C. on an important element of our pay equity program.

Retroactive comparability payments should be in the pockets of almost 40,000 HEU members by Sept. 8. And most employers have complied with the agreement to implement the rate increases by May 1.

In a sector of society – taking care of people – long considered women's work, the issue of pay equity is an important one. In the 1970s close to 80 per cent of HEU members made less than the average wage in B.C.

Within this discriminatory pay structure, all health care work was undervalued. In addition predominantly female occupations were being paid a lot less than predominantly male occupations.

Job action in 1992 resulted in a solid pay equity win in collective bargaining that included comparability with the direct public service as a key element. After a down payment in 1994, several years of arbitrations and Labour Relations Board hearings followed, culminating in the final confirmation on March 14, 2000 and the

HEABC's decision not to appeal the ruling.

The struggle to end gender-based wage discrimination in health care has been a long one. This pay equity win shortens by several years the wait for gender-neutral wage rates for many front-line workers. So we have reason to celebrate our achievement, but there is still work to be done.

Some female entry-level jobs are still below the entry-level male job; positions like housekeeping aide, some food service workers, laundry workers and some clerks and store attendants. In addition, some long-term care facilities have been excluded from comparability altogether.

'What is urgently needed is comprehensive pay legislation'

This means that some HEU members that are doing exactly the same work under the same collective agreement are being paid less than others.

It's unfortunate workers in B.C. must depend on collective bargaining to achieve gender neutral pay rates. What is urgently needed is

comprehensive pay legislation.

However, there is strong opposition from the Liberals in the legislature. Opposition health critic Colin Hansen (MLA for Vancouver-Quilchena) targeted HEU's pay equity victory in the B.C. legislature on March 29.

We are approaching the next round of bargaining, and we should expect attacks by the Liberals and others on pay equity and our other contract gains to become more frequent and vicious.

It's clear that we still have a fight on our hands before wage discrimination in health care is nothing but a memory.

voice/mail

THE GUARDIAN WELCOMES YOUR FEEDBACK. SEND LETTERS TO 2006 WEST 10TH AVE., VANCOUVER V6J 4P5 OR PHONE 1-800-909-4994. PLEASE BE BRIEF.

We want to know

I am a Community Social Service Worker (CSSW). While I am not writing on behalf of my local here in Victoria, I believe that the comments below are shared by many of my brothers and sisters.

To be blunt, I am not satisfied with the level of service provided by HEU in areas of leadership and communication. A current situation underlines my dissatisfaction – we have yet to receive our retro and raise despite a resolution to our strike months ago. With so many rumours and anger over what is happening, it is important members hear from HEU officials about what can and will be done so that we receive our retro – with interest – and our raises without further delay. One rumour says that we won't be seeing our retro/raise until June next year. Is this true? If it is, it is unacceptable!

While I understand that the issue of retro/raises has been taken to the Labour Relations Board, we also need to know our rights. For example, are we in a strike position if our contract has not yet been honoured? To answer this and other questions, I suggest that

a fact sheet/newsletter be distributed to all locals whose members are waiting for the said contract to be fully implemented. Not only would this fact sheet/newsletter show leadership and facilitate communication on current events, it would also be a means to blunt some of the rumours and anger. In minutes from a recent inter local meeting the following was noted: "It was felt that HEU was doing too little, too late." I feel that a fact sheet/newsletter would help to ease these concerns.

The issue of communication is not new. During the strike and afterwards when we were waiting for clarification over night staff wages, there was lack of communication that made matters worse than necessary. Had newsletters been distributed from time to time explaining what was going on, tensions among the rank and file would not have been so intense. There was a great deal of anger directed at HEU because many of us felt we were not well informed about the issue of night staff wages. We thought a fully comprehensive agreement had already been reached.

Good communication is one sign of good leadership. I believe one means to improve communication is through newsletters – especially when there are unresolved critical issues.

I would also like to suggest that a column or two in the Guardian be set aside to discuss CSSW issues and what is being done by the union to resolve our problems.

Poor communication – or none at all – only intensifies the situa-

tion at hand and in the long run, weakens the HEU's effectiveness.

TIM BOULTBEE,
CSSW, Victoria

• *Editor's note: All community social services workers received their pay increases plus retro at end of February so they could make RRSP contributions. Those that did not receive interest were advised to file grievances, which they did.*

12-month bridge for LPNs

As you are aware there is an acute shortage of registered nurses in British Columbia. We would like to point out a way to alleviate this shortage in 12 months.

In B.C. 7,000 licensed practical nurses are registered with the college. The government should set up an appropriate course in order to upgrade a practicing LPN to an RN. We believe the duration of the course should be no more than 12 months. Presently some colleges offer a 16-month course for LPNs wishing to enter the RN program. The extra months are primarily based on duplication of theory and practicum. Another possibility would be to open up an apprentice course similar to the ones the hospitals instituted in the past.

The health care system does not recognize, nor allow us to practice all our qualifications in certain facilities. The LPNs are not being utilized or recognized for their full potential in the health care setting, and we would like the opportunity to advance in our careers.

Granted that not all LPNs would be interested in upgrading to become a RN, but if the government encourages us to upgrade

with similar incentives as given to the RNs in regarding nursing specialties, we are certain that there would be a substantial amount of LPNs wishing to take advantage of this opportunity. Some would be working in the nursing industry for 20 or 30 more years.

These incentives would include having the 12-month course paid for, including wage loss. LPNs would give concessions in return, including making a five-year contract to work as an RN only in B.C., loss of seniority and loss of holidays due to the lack of seniority.

ERIC RICARD, LPN
PAM KERLUCK, LPN

Kudos for Gay and Guardian

As a former labour appointee to the Northern Interior Regional Health Board, I wanted to let you know some things.

1) I really appreciate Gay Burdison's (HEU's recently retired director of regionalization) efforts at educating the labour reps at the two conferences I attended. She is a gifted leader.

2) I am no longer the NIRHB member representing labour. This task falls to Lorna Foisey, a home support worker and 1st vice-chair of local 411 BCGEU.

3) I hope you continue to send me your excellent newsletter. I find it complements my own union paper very well. Sending the Guardian to all unionized but non-HEU supervisors might remind them supervising is not anti-solidarity by definition, only by how some people choose to practice it.

KARLA STAFF,
BCGEU

Guardian

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

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What we're up to

Call Women's Committee toll-free

1-888-696-2044 – that's the brand new HEU Women's Committee toll-free phone number. It's up and running now, giving members throughout the province one more way of getting information on women's issues in the union, and of connecting with the committee members.

This is one of several Women's Committee Year 2000 initiatives along with the women's gatherings at the

table officers' meetings, the promotion of local women's committees, and participation in World March of Women 2000 activities including our own banner project – a creative venture to be presented at HEU's 22nd Biennial Convention in October.

The toll-free number will run messages with items of interest to union women as well as labour and community events and actions by, for and about women.

And if your local would like assistance in setting up a local women's committee, let the Women's Committee know. Leave a contact name, local and the best phone number to call back on, and one of the committee members will be in touch.

So mark these numbers down – province-wide toll-free: 1-888-696-2044; Greater Vancouver: (604) 742-8801.



Table officers are holding workshops in preparation for the year 2000 Convention and Wage Policy Conference. The week before the Easter holiday, the Lower Mainland/Coastal Region locals held their workshops at the Blue Horizon Hotel. Mindy Lu from the Inglewood local reads her breakout group's ideas on what HEU members can work on this year. "We need to talk about the issues that are important to our members, issue-based arguments," she said. "Like comparability and care aides' issues. Also we have to try to have better working relationships with members in the other health care unions."

Victoria members spin their own

The Victoria General local has launched their own website, with an online newsletter and up-to-date information on what is going on in their local.

A good example of what a wonderful tool the web can be is their call to members to attend the May 3 meeting of the Capital Health Region.

The region has announced

that they are going to increase the parking charge for all CHR employees to pay for the construction of the Royal Jubilee Hospital parkade.

HEU members say that the increase in parking rates is unacceptable.

A report on the meeting will be on the website. The address is www.members.home.net/heu-riff-raff.

Of course, the Juan de Fuca

local has had its own site for a couple of years now (www.heu.com).

The Gay and Lesbian Standing Committee (www.pridepages.org) and the People with disAbilities Standing Committee (www.alberni.net/PeoplewithdisAbilities) also have their sites.

Check out the links on the HEU website for more.

continued on page 4

School workers' will is unbroken

HUNDREDS OF CUPE school board workers from across the province rallied in Vancouver May 15 to show their determination to win a fair collective agreement after Victoria ended their strike and legislated them back to work in April.

Government actions, like the draconian back to work law, "have not broken the will of CUPE members and their struggle to win a fair collective agreement that we can submit to ratification by our members," said CUPE B.C. president Barry O'Neill.

CUPE's pledge to escalate its actions was reinforced by the presence at the rally of key labour leaders and supporters from other unions like HEU and the B.C. Teacher's Federation.

O'Neill said a fair settlement must address critical issues for school board workers like job security, wage and benefit improvements, and hours of work.

"We will achieve a fair settlement for our members," he said. "It's time for the provincial government to stand up for working people in B.C. It's time for them to take responsibility for solving the continuing crisis in school board bargaining."

Jane Bouey, a parent of a special needs child, said



STANDING TALL, PROUD Hundreds of CUPE school board workers rallied May 15 to press government for a fair contract. CUPE B.C. president Barry O'Neill (inset) said it's time for the NDP to stand up for working people.

the media's effort to paint the bargaining impasse as a dispute around the role of volunteers is wrong. "The real issue is funding and cutbacks, in which job security for CUPE members is tied to the quality of education," Bouey said.

CUPE B.C. Health Services Division vice-president Leo Bibb was on hand to deliver HEU's support for the school board workers. HEU condemned Bill 7, the back to work legislation, when it was brought in by the Dosanjh government April 1.

Comparability's a reality

HEU has reached an agreement with health employers that will put retroactive comparability payments in the hands of almost 40,000 HEU members on or before Sept. 8.

The payments represent a four-year old pay equity bill that arbitrator Stephen Kelleher ordered employers to pay in a decision brought down last fall.

The majority of facilities sector members have already received comparability-related wage rate adjustments that kicked in on May 1.

Retroactivity covers the period April 1, 1996 to April 30, 2000 and will result in individual payments ranging up to \$6,700, less regular payroll deductions. Health employers have agreed in principle to provide these payments to individual members in a separate cheque that includes calculation details.

The payments will occur despite the fact that HEU and health employers disagree on the total interest due on retroactivity. That matter has been referred to Kelleher.

"Fortunately, we have been successful in separating the issue of retroactivity from the question of interest owing," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "As a result, retroactivity payments will not be delayed."

HEU and HEABC have agreed that the global amount of interest owing will be divided by the number of full-time equivalent employees as of May 1, 2000 and distributed to all facilities sector members in proportion to hours they have worked during the period April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000.

"This method of delivering interest acknowledges that all members deserve compensation for non-wage elements of comparability with the direct government service like hours of work and pensions," says Allnutt. "It also recognizes the role all HEU members have played in achieving this key pay equity victory."

Improved maternity/parental leave benefits related to Kelleher's award took effect May 1, 2000.

LaPlante elected to Blue Cross board

HEU financial secretary Mary LaPlante has been elected to the board of directors of Pacific Blue Cross at the organization's April 26 annual general meeting.

LaPlante, who served on the boards of Pacific Blue Cross and CU&C from 1994 to 1999, credits her win to the support of the many HEU members and staff that turned out to offer their support.

"Our activists believe that Pacific Blue Cross needs to be more aggressive in its advocacy for our publicly administered and delivered health care system," says LaPlante. "I intend to form the kind of alliances on the board of directors that will support initiatives in defense of Medicare."

Also re-elected to the board are CUPE B.C.'s Colleen Jordan and Leif Hansen of the UFCW.

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

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Feb. 29 was Day of Action

HEU locals around the province participated in CUPE's Feb. 29 Day of Action to Save

Medicare. It was a partner action to the ambulance tour CUPE sponsored, with ambulances from various parts of the country carrying the message out to communities that Medicare is in dire straits and

Canadians need to rally to its defense.

St. Paul's Hospital local held a rally outside their facility, with the B.C. ambulance showing up mid-rally. VGH local set up a table and asked people entering Laurel Pavilion to sign a Save Medicare petition. They also passed out DeKlein Privatization postcards. HEU and the B.C. Federation of Labour produced 200,000 of the postcards for the B.C. Health Coalition.

Nanaimo nursing team holds forum

Nanaimo was the site of the fourth forum being held by the Nursing Team Committee. Organizers said they had been bumped (by doctors) from the room they originally booked, and were relegated to the cafeteria. And they weren't sure how many people would show up. But as people started arriving, it was evident they were going to



Betty Avaiki tells how the care aides in her facility were worried about the repercussions for workload with some nursing team members away for skills upgrading. There are provisions for this in the initiative, those attending the meeting were told.

have to make the circle larger. Then larger. It turned out to be a well-attended meeting, and the discussion was lively.

Zorica Bosancic gave a brief outline of the \$5 million

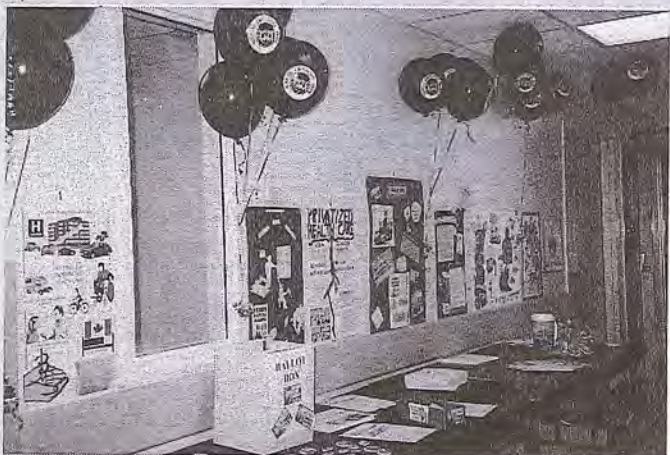
government initiative for skills upgrading LPNs and care aides. Dan Hingley spoke of the upcoming scope of practice hearings.

LPNs in attendance talked about their own concerns, about the initiative and how it was playing itself out in their facilities, about workload, upcoming bargaining, etc.

Workers honour dead and injured

This year there were three venues to observe the April 28 International Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured on the Job.

The Vancouver and District Labour Council's ceremony was on the steps of City Hall. CUPE B.C. vice-president Barry O'Neill and COPE city councillor Fred Bass addressed the 100 people assembled in front of Capt. George Vancouver's statue to commemorate those



The MSA local held a poster contest. Participants were urged to creatively express their wish to keep health care in Canada public. They displayed all the posters and held a vote. Local chair Joyce Giroux won, but all of the posters were wonderful. The posters are on display in the communications department of the Provincial Office.

Nanaimo member defends rights of Hepatitis C victims

When her husband was diagnosed, Karen Park became a crusader

IT'S BEEN almost two years now since the lives of Karen Park and her family were turned upside down. It was a change that thrust Park into a life of advocacy and activism she had never imagined for herself.

She is now in her 25th year at Nanaimo Regional District Hospital. For the last two-and-a-half of those years she's been a mail distribution clerk, but before that she worked in laundry, housekeeping, dietary, preparing packs for the OR.

In early 1999 her husband Doug, a machine tender at the Harmac Division pulp mill in Nanaimo for 26 years, began to complain about feeling tired all the time, vaguely ill — one of those things you just can't put your finger on.

After a while he decided he'd better to go to a doctor about it, to see if something was wrong.

Something was wrong. A random blood test found that he had Hepatitis C. The couple asked themselves, "How could this happen?"

Thinking back many years, they remembered that in 1983 he had a brain aneurysm and spent a couple of months at Royal Jubilee. Part of the treatment involved blood transfusions, and that's where they figure he contracted the Hep C.

"Well, okay," we said. He's going to need treatment. We just assumed that costs would be covered and medication would be paid for," she says. "We found to our horror that this was not the case."

There is a drug treatment that is used for Hep C patients. According to Park, the success rate isn't that great — less than 50 per cent — but it's good enough not to ignore.

The problem is it is very expensive, and it is very debilitating. You cannot work while you are on the one-year treatment. Doug's treatment, which he began in July 1999, costs \$2000 per month.

Park says a lot of people who have Hep C don't want to go public, because they think there is a stigma attached to it. And at first they also tried to keep it to themselves. But her husband had been forced to take sick leave and to drop out of a business management course in which he was enrolled. And their savings were fast disappearing.

"We've never really been activists," says Park. "But we felt we couldn't sit by and see everything we worked for go down the tubes because there was no help out there."

She started out small with a simple letter to the Nanaimo newspaper. "I want everyone to be aware that not all Hepatitis C victims have been compensated," she wrote. "These people must have their medical expenses paid if they want to have any chance of fighting this disease."

The paper sent a reporter out to talk to the couple and wrote an article. The

local Hep C society saw the article and offered their help.

But the Parks knew they had a whole other network. And that was their unions. He's a long-time member of the Pulp and Paperworkers' Union, his sister is a Telus employee and a member of the Telecommunications Workers' Union, and, of course, Park is an HEU member.

Park put together a form letter, asking for federal compensation for the victims of tainted blood and provincial compensation through Pharmacare for the drug costs.

"I think between all our family, friends, co-workers and union members, about 20,000 letters arrived on the federal and provincial governments' doorsteps," she says.

In December the provincial government notified the Parks that it would fund the drug therapy through Pharmacare, which they actually started to do in April.

This is not just a victory for the Park family. Pharmacare is going to pay for this therapy for everyone who qualifies for this treatment.

"Imagine sitting at home, getting worse and not knowing how much damage is being done while you wait," she says.

She's heard of people who have gone to desperate ends to get the money. Now they will get their treatment paid for by Pharmacare.

This activism brought with it another kind of activism — in her union. Her local recently declared her the recipient

BALANCING



IT ALL



KAREN PARK, at work as a mail distribution clerk at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, is grateful to her sisters and brothers at the local and other unions for being among the 20,000 who mailed letters to authorities.

of their annual Most Active Member Award.

Local chair Dan Hingley says, "It's not just for her willingness to help the local out, but for Park's continued commitment to all British Columbians in an unselfish fight to ensure that Hep C victims receive compensation."

Park says the struggle is far from over. Getting federal compensation for those victims that were infected before the federal government's cutoff date is the next goal. And educating the public about Hep C.

But she feels a lot of satisfaction from the victory. She says, "I firmly believe that regardless of how you get Hep C, you deserve the care that should be given."

• BALANCING IT ALL is a regular Guardian column about the challenges facing women activists.

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

who died or have been hurt while working. John Fitzpatrick, secretary-treasurer of the VDLC played *Amazing Grace* on the bagpipes and there was a moment of silence. Jim Sinclair, B.C. Federation of Labour president, and Hassan Yussuif, CLC vice president, talked to the



Before taking the Lower Mainland banner off to one of the locals, the women at the Vancouver luncheon wrote down their thoughts.

crowd at #4 Firehall in Surrey, and the Firefighters Marching Band also honoured those workers. The other observance was downtown on the steps of the Vancouver Art Gallery, put on by the Workers' Compensation Board.

Women's banner day

The Women's Committee is hosting luncheons for the participants of the table officers' workshops around the regions. The Lower Mainland/Coastal Region luncheon took place on April 20 at the Blue Horizon Hotel. Committee members outlined their plans for the coming year, and invited participants to organize women's committees in their locals.

One of their undertakings for 2000 is the Banner Project. Banners emblazoned with the word "woman" in a multitude of languages around the purple



Participants in the Advanced Shop Stewards' training in Nelson pose outside on a sunny day. Some comments from stewards about what belonging to a union means were "being able to help co-workers when needed," "good wages and benefits and a more secure work environment," "knowing I have rights and benefits and knowing there is help to enforce them," and "empowerment as a person and as a group."

border will be handed over to the women of one local at each of the table officers' luncheons.

There are 20 banners in total, and between now and Convention, the banners will travel from local to local within each region. In the banners' centres

is the symbol of the Women's March 2000. The rest is white space, to be filled in by women who express their thoughts on what they would like to see in the future, what they think about the present and their observations about the past.

At Convention, all HEU members will be able to view the banners.

"They are sure to cause a sensation," says assistant secretary-business manager Zorica Bosancic. "They will be beautiful and thought-provoking."

HEU video takes looks at Harris' health reform

With a provincial election on B.C.'s horizon, Liberal Party leader Gordon Campbell and his business allies are pledging to introduce social and economic policies based on the so-called common sense revolution of Ontario Premier Mike Harris.

So, what would be the impact on health care workers and our Medicare system here in B.C. if a Campbell-led government imported a dose of Harris-style health care reform?

To find answers, HEU is producing a special video for early summer release that looks in depth at what those impacts have been on workers and the system.

Working together with CUPE's Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, HEU communications director Stephen Howard and a video crew spent a week traveling to eight Ontario communities in late March and early April. Howard interviewed dozens of health workers in hospitals, long-term and extended care facilities, and in important community services like home support, amassing close to 30 hours of footage.

Howard says he was shocked by the chaos and upheaval in Ontario's health system. "We visited five of the more than 40 hospitals that are on the closure list," he said. "It's an eerie sensation to pull in at a hospital entrance that's chain-locked shut, or see a gutted kitchen or a stripped-down ER at another



KEEP IT OPEN Health care workers at the Henderson Hospital in Hamilton are waging a massive community campaign to keep Ontario Premier Mike Harris from closing their facility. Harris' health care agenda has targeted more than 40 hospitals for closure.

facility awaiting the wrecker's ball.

"There are so many compelling stories about the experiences of our sisters and brothers in Ontario; like extended caregivers struggling to provide adequate care after Harris chopped their funding levels in half, or home support activists confronting a mandatory low bid tendering process that's resulting

in widespread privatization of this crucial health service."

• For information on how to order a copy of the video, contact Gail Paquette in the HEU communications department, 734-3431, 1-800-663-5813, or gpaquette@heu.org.

Confusion reigns at Capilano Care Centre

Capilano Care Centre in North Vancouver is laying off staff, claiming their funding levels have fallen due to a drop in the acuity level of their residents. But HEU says it doesn't add up and has taken the issue to an expedited arbitration.

Capilano Care Centre is owned by Central Park Lodge, a multinational corporation that has seniors' care facilities in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, Washington and three in British Columbia.

In the last three months they have given displacement notices to a total of 24 HEU members – 11 part-time care aides, seven part-time activity aides, one dietary aide, and eight housekeepers. According to HEU many of them were not given proper bump-

ing information. Some of them may even have been given instructions that, if they follow them, will jeopardize their right to register with HLAA and could be a basis for denial of their employment security. Instructions such as switching to the casual list instead of bumping or applying for employment insurance benefits. As well, they are no longer bothering to notify the union when its members are being displaced.

Minutes from a North Shore Regional Health Board meeting indicate the facility had \$85,000 cut from their budget, saying that the acuity rates of the residents are not as high as before. But the union did a little arithmetic, and figured out the money saved with the layoffs amounts to at least twice that figure.

"Something is not adding up, obviously," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "And we are very curious about seeing their documents in discovery at the hearing."

The issue is further muddled by the fact that in early April the facility ran ads in the *Vancouver Sun* for care aides, activity aides, dietary aides and registered nurses!

A hearing date has been set for September, but the union is trying to move it up to June.

"At the hearing we will ask that all layoffs and displacements be rescinded with full redress for anyone affected by any wrongdoing on the part of the employer – and damages," says Allnutt.

PRESIDENT'S DESK



Canadians' message is loud and clear: keep health care public

by Fred Muzin

DESPITE tremendous public opposition, on the evening of May 10, Alberta Premier Ralph Klein's Conservative government imposed Bill 11, its so-called *Medicare Protection Act*, by once again invoking closure to cut off debate and force a vote. This regressive legislation permits overnight stays in private hospitals, allows a two-tier health care system whereby extra billing is allowed for 'enhanced' services and jeopardizes public Medicare throughout Canada under the trade provisions of NAFTA.

Canadians must be very clear – the attack is being driven by ideology, not by the desire to preserve, improve and expand our most cherished social program. There is considerable evidence that privatized medicine would result in higher costs, longer wait lists and decisions based on profitability rather than medical need.

The lack of action by federal health minister Allan Rock and his peers to derail Klein's initiative is disgraceful. CUPE has provided an extensive legal opinion that Bill 11 violates the *Canada Health Act*. Rock has flip-flopped on the issue and has adopted a wait and see attitude rather than providing the real leadership that Canadians expect and deserve.

'Public health care provides dignity for all'

More than 30 years ago, we consciously decided as a nation that access to health care should be a right of citizenship, not a privilege enjoyed by only the rich and influential. Our health is too important to be treated as a commodity whereby private profit is made off of people's illnesses.

And Canadians made the right choice. Public health care provides dignity for all, is one of our strongest competitive advantages and sharply contrasts with the American experience whereby millions of people have no health coverage and medical expenditures are a leading cause of bankruptcies.

How did we get to the current 'crisis'? The federal government caved in to the debt and deficit hysteria and slashed transfer payments to the provinces for health and education. This resulted in bed and hospital closures, delisting of services provided, a tremendous increase in workload and injuries on the frontlines and an erosion of confidence in the public system. As well inadequate resources were devoted to training new providers and upgrading the skills of those in the system to meet the challenges of an aging population.

Even a recent Angus Reid poll conducted for the Canadian Medical Association indicates that 71 per cent of those polled believed that they would get needed health care services if they had a serious medical problem. This personal experience, which is reflective of the commitment of all health care workers, conflicts with the perception by 78 per cent that there is a crisis.

People are influenced by the barrage of opinion that constantly confronts them. Canadians clearly prefer public funding for health care. In Alberta, where the debate over Bill 11 has been raging, opposition to private funding for health care is 20 per cent higher than elsewhere.

However, in B.C. there has been insufficient public debate about modernizing and preserving public Medicare. It is essential the federal government stop the panic by dismantling Alberta's Bill 11 immediately and promoting a rational public dialogue.



HEATHER HURTUBISE AND SHIRLEY JONES stand beside the portfolios from the unit clerks who recently completed the prior learning assessment NUCCP. Two assessors spent hours evaluating each portfolio.

Ask unit clerks, they know a lot

by Margi Blamey

Unit clerks are busy people. Their desks are the hub of any unit with phones ringing, people stopping by, a stream of paperwork to complete. There are patient charts to set up, doctors' orders to process and patient admissions, discharges and transfers to arrange. A colleague calls in sick and a replacement must be found. A distraught family member looks for a few gentle words of understanding. Everyone and everything needs attention – now.

This scene is very familiar to Shirley Jones from Abbotsford's MSA Hospital and Heather Hurtubise from Langley Memorial. Both are nursing unit clerks and they love their jobs.

Both will tell you that the common saying is true – ask the unit clerks, they know everything. The position is often called the "real manager."

Seven years ago Jones and Hurtubise each decided to expand their high level of career satisfaction by instructing in the Nursing Unit Clerk Certificate Program (NUCCP) at the University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV). And two years ago, Shirley and Heather became more involved by diving into the creation and implementation of a unique adult-learning program – an

accredited course for experienced unit clerks based on the assessment and recognition of an individual's prior learning – that would result in a Nursing Unit Clerk Certificate.

"It's amazing the number of unit clerks who have been doing this for more than 20 years," says Hurtubise. "They came into the job and learned it by doing it."

Based on the requirements of a group of unit clerks at Langley Memorial Hospital (LMH) who had initiated discussions about alternative ways to complete their NUC certification, a pilot course began through UCFV in June 1998, with 10 LMH unit clerks, the sponsorship of the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency and the full support of the hospital.

By all accounts the innovative program was successful.

Jones and Hurtubise are clearly delighted to be part of the university's prior learning assessment of NUCCP. They speak enthusiastically about the students, the time, energy and commitment that go into each person's learning portfolio (a personal documentation of an individual's knowledge and skills), and the strong sense of accomplishment and value participants take from the experience.



NOTEBOOK

Battle taking shape

by Mike Old

With an election and contract talks expected within the year, B.C.'s political right is bringing its health care agenda into sharp focus and your wages and benefits are clearly in the crosshairs.

The battle plan was laid out by the B.C. Business Summit when they launched the most protracted pre-election campaign in B.C. history two and a half years ago. A key campaign plank: contracting out and privatization of services in hospitals and schools.

It's a consistent theme – the B.C. Business Council's Jock Finlayson recently told the media that the health care system needs a fundamental rethink of how contracts are handled and services delivered.

Translation? Extract profits from housekeeping, food services, laundry and other "hotel services" by contracting them out and cutting wages.

The B.C. Medical Association is also working their angle, calling for a value for money audit of health care. Sidestepping the issue of their recent \$175 million fee settlement, BCMA president Ian Courtice has fingered unionized workers for increased health care costs and has called for the private sector to look after "non-essential" health services.

The top doc even suggested to the Kelowna Chamber of Com-



'The BCMA president has fingered unionized workers for increased health care costs'

merce that the health care system should be run by a medical crown corporation. Didn't the Business Summit – of which the BCMA was an endorsing organization – call for the privatization of crown corporations?

The propaganda effort in this battle is being stoked by the Fraser Institute. They've been recycling a flimsy 1995 study that argues the health care system would save \$200 million (\$4,500 for each HEU member) annually if unionized workers in "non-medical" jobs like housekeeping, laundry and dietary were paid at the same rate as their unionized counterparts in the hospitality industry.

The study has holes you could drive an ambulance through. That hasn't stopped the media from quoting it or from insisting that support workers wages are "crowding out" RN wages. That's a favourite of Vancouver Sun columnist Vaughn Palmer. He's reported that laundry workers and cleaners made up to \$22 an hour. In fact, there are only about 20 housekeeping and laundry supervisors in the entire province who earn wages in the \$22 an hour range – and 95 per cent earn wages that are about \$4 an hour less.

Accuracy aside, the argument works for those who say privatization and lower wages for unionized health care workers are the trade-off for focussing resources on direct patient care.

Of course the low wage, privatization strategy won't work unless the right can promote its silent partner – the B.C. Liberals – into power in Victoria. That's why we must prepare for bargaining, and the next election, right now.

Labour

NOTEWORTHY NEWS ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE HERE AND ABROAD



MIKE OLD PHOTO

BLACK OUT Delivery of the *National Post* in B.C. was delayed May 1 as about 100 protesters blocked trucks from picking up 60,000 copies of Hollinger's flagship daily from a Delta printing plant. On the same day, activists leafletted 10 airports across the country in support of strikers at the *Calgary Herald*.

Supporters rally to back Calgary Herald strikers

by Mike Old

ABOUT 100 protesters marked International Workers' Day by delaying the delivery of 60,000 copies of the *National Post* in British Columbia. Union members and community activists braved heavy rain in an all night effort to block the entrance to the Delta plant where the Hollinger-owned *Post* is printed.

The action was taken to protest the concentration of media ownership in Conrad Black's Hollinger empire as well as to support the six-month strike of journalists and distribution workers at the Hollinger-controlled *Calgary Herald*.

The blockade of the *Post* ended at about 6:30 a.m. after the Labour Relations Board issued a cease and desist order.

As one protester put it, "This May 1st, British Co-

lumbia is a *National Post* free zone."

Published reports suggest that Hollinger Inc. is considering suing both the Communications Energy and Paperworkers' Union and the Council of Canadians for damages.

In other developments in the *Herald* strike:

- 105 members of the press operators' union were locked out May 2 and joined journalists and distribution workers on the picket line;

- Hollinger announces April 25 that it wants to sell off most of its community papers and is considering merging others. CEP, which represents striking *Herald* journalists, says the move is required to subsidize the money-losing *National Post*.

"This is a desperate ploy to mollify shareholders, under the guise of strengthening its position in the 'new media,'" said Gail Lem, CEP's vice-president of the union's media division.

Black's attacks are venomous

HEU president Fred Muzin is one of the latest targets of the poisoned pen of Hollinger Inc. chairman Conrad Black.

The global press baron has been attracting a lot of attention – not just for his refusal to bargain a fair collective agreement with journalists, distribution staff and press operators at the *Calgary Herald* – but for highly personal attacks on his critics, of which there are many.

Nobody is immune from Black's vitriol. In April, he penned a letter to his strike-bound paper attacking a leading *Calgary* cleric. "If your jumped-up little twerp of a bishop thinks I'm not a very good Catholic, I think he's a prime candidate for an exorcism (sic)," wrote Black.

Earlier this year, Black advised B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair that the "present strike is an attempted left-wing coup d'état in the newsroom of the *Calgary Herald*, which serves a community that includes very few mindless socialists of the type you would find convivial."

Now Black can count Muzin among his pen pals.

In response to a letter

supporting striking *Her-*

ald workers, Black tells

the HEU president that

he won't "concede the

sclerosis of the senior-

ity demands and we

won't hand over the

newsroom to the left

wing of the NDP." In

more recent corre-

spondence, Black

advises Muzin to

"check into the psychiatric

ward of one of the hospitals where your

union is, I'm sure, a force for 'justice and dignity'."

Not to be outpenned, Muzin replied, "As for your

suggestion that I check into the psychiatric ward of a

hospital, Canadians have the knowledge and integri-

ty to understand that advocating for justice and free

speech does not constitute a mental illness."



Oregon farmworkers urge boycott

The HEU has thrown its support behind a union of farmworkers who are taking on a multinational food processor owned by 250 fruit and vegetable growers in Oregon's Willamette Valley.

The Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), or Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United, represent more than 4,500 farmworkers – mostly of Mexican origin – who have been fighting for collective agreements with NORPAC Foods for more than 10 years. But under U.S. labour laws that date back to 1935, farmworkers are excluded from the usual certification process and must depend on voluntary recognition from employers.

"As a result, NORPAC affiliated growers are able to impose depression-era working and living conditions on twenty-first century farmworkers," says PCUN organizer Alice Gates.

Those conditions include 'right to work' fees that result in wages below the legal minimum, unsafe working conditions including exposure to harmful pesticides, 14-hour shifts in the fields with few breaks and cramped and unsanitary company-owned housing.

And Gates says that farmworkers who've shown

support for the union or spoken out against their working and living conditions have been threatened, fired and evicted from company housing.

To increase pressure on growers to bargain collective agreements, PCUN called for a boycott of NORPAC frozen fruits and vegetables in 1992 and its campaign has picked up support from more than 100 labour, religious, community and student groups since that time.

Institutional customers like hospitals, long-term care facilities, universities and colleges account for about 60 per cent of NORPAC's sales.

"HEU members can support PCUN's campaign in a very concrete way," says HEU president Fred Muzin. "By identifying facility kitchens that use NORPAC products, we can pressure employers to discontinue their use. That's the language that NORPAC understands."

Gates couldn't agree more, pointing out that in 1998 NORPAC reported \$5 million (U.S.) in losses – the worst year in the company's 75-year history.

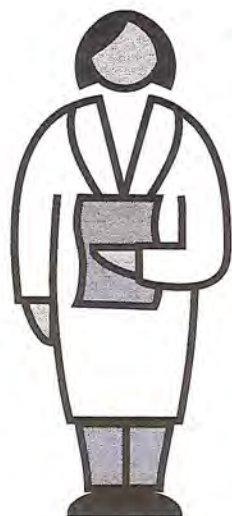
"With the solidarity of HEU members and other Canadian workers, we will force NORPAC growers to the table," says Gates.

- Find out more about the PCUN boycott at www.pcun.org. Your local executive has information to help you identify NORPAC products that may be served in your facility's kitchen.



PCUN PHOTO

BACKBREAKING WORK is the order of the day for agricultural workers in Oregon's Willamette Valley.



CHOOSE WITH CARE

With a provincial election on the horizon, it's time to take a close look at what the political parties have on their agendas. And who their allies are.

When the NDP was elected in 1991, it was a great victory for the working people of British Columbia. The welfare of big business had always come first with the former government of the Socreds, but now the interests of B.C.

workers would be in the forefront. And by and large they were. During its tenure, the NDP government has passed legislation making it easier to certify unions. It has periodically raised the minimum wage so that we currently have the highest in Canada. Joint trusteeship of public pensions gives workers more say in how their pension funds are managed. It has consistently raised the budgets of health care and education.

by Dale Fuller

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
Terry Sunderland

But we must recognize that the government has done some things that are not good for workers and their families. Poor people have not benefitted much from a social democratic government in Victoria.

And recently the NDP government ordered striking public school support staff back to work.

This has happened before with NDP premiers, both here in B.C. and in Ontario. Dave Barrett ordered B.C. workers back to work in 1975 and Bob Rae rammed through a "social contract" stripping Ontario public service workers of wages, contract conditions and the right to free collective bargaining. Both leaders lost big time in subsequent elections.

B.C. ended up with the Socreds and Ontarians are stuck with Mike Harris for the foreseeable future.

"Progressive people in B.C. are facing a dilemma," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "In the next election, we need to choose with care, and that means knowing who our allies are — and aren't."

So let's not forget that although Liberal leader Gordon Campbell makes clumsy attempts at appearing folksy, his party's allies are big business. The Business Summit, the Fraser Institute and the B.C. Medical Association are lobby groups with policies remarkably similar to those of the Liberals.

Business says it will cut taxes by \$1.5 billion, and absorb the enormous decrease in government revenue by cutting one billion dollars from government spending.

Those cuts could come from programs like public health care, public education, the environment and social housing. Programs that workers, poor people and their families use.

Business says they would be 'trimming the fat.' But cuts to public services mean job losses in the public and private sector. Access to services is reduced and families end up with higher out-of-pocket expenses.

And in the end, it would be the wealthy, big businesses and corporations who would benefit with both the tax cuts and the cuts to government services. Their tax breaks would be huge compared to those of the average

UNIONS say



• strengthen labour legislation, protect right to join a union

• raise minimum wage

• implement pay equity

• toughen anti-scab laws

• protect workers' jobs from contracting out

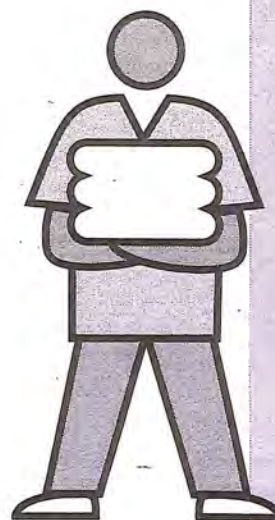
• restore federal health care funding levels to 50 per cent of cost to provinces

• modernize Medicare by establishing a commitment to long-term care, home care, pharmacare and recruitment and retention of nursing team

• no wage controls, no more cuts in public sector

• continue to support education through tuition freezes, hire more educators in B.C.

• in health care, remove wall between community and facilities sectors, ensure unions stay with workers during restructuring



wage-earner. And if public services are privatized, they have the money to pay for them. They might even profit from the sell-off of underfunded public services that no longer work.

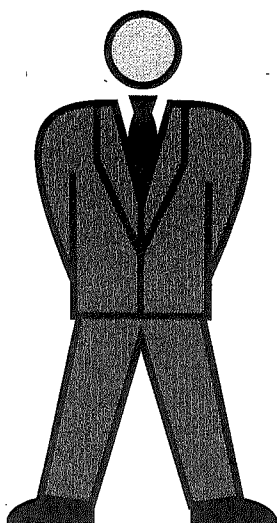
Canadians reject two-tier health care. The Liberals and their friends say that some parts of the health care system could be provided by private business. Things like laundry, food services and maintenance.

And young people would suffer the devastating consequences of lowering the minimum wage, lifting the tuition freeze at post-secondary institutions and cutbacks to the education system.

Working people have good reason to be upset with the NDP's back-to-work legislation. But the Liberals and their allies want to revamp the Labour Code, making it harder for unorganized workers to unionize. They would take away the protection for striking workers that anti-scab legislation now provides.

Jim Sinclair, president of the B.C. Federation of Labour, says, "An anti-labour business agenda fronted by Gordon Campbell and the Liberals is not a viable one for the labour movement."

Allnutt agrees, saying, "We must find a way to remind the government where its real support comes from."



B.C. BUSINESS SUMMIT

proposes

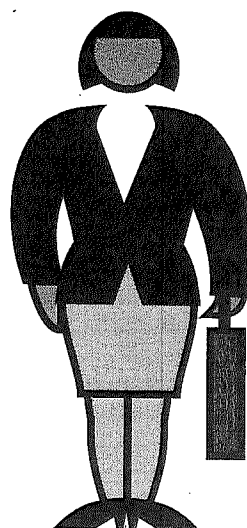


- \$1.5 billion tax cut
- \$1 billion cut in provincial program spending, including public services
- removing employment security
- contracting out public services
- gutting *Labour Code*, eliminating anti-scab legislation
- selling public lands and infrastructure, privatizing Crown corporations
- eliminating tuition freeze in post-secondary institutions
- lowering employment standards and minimum wage, especially for young people, even a two-tier minimum wage

Liberals say



- eliminate employment security for health care workers
- contract out some health care services like laundry, food services and maintenance to the private sector
- tax cuts, reduce government spending by cutting public services
- eliminate the Corporate Capital Tax
- privatize Crown corporations
- implement substantial deregulation of industry
- make it harder to certify unions by changes to the *Labour Code*
- outlaw sectoral bargaining
- loosen regulations on land-use and forest industry
- set aside the Nisga'a Treaty and put it to a referendum



BCMA says



- privatize non-patient health services like food services, laundry, maintenance
- cut health care workers' wages
- two-tier, U.S.-style health care system
- delivery of some health care services by private sector
- privatize preventative health care services, which they call peripheral wellness; public health services should be for those who are "sick now"
- unionized health care workers are too expensive
- base level of home care should be public, but "extras" should be paid for privately

FRASER INSTITUTE

promotes



- two-tier, U.S. style health care
- smaller government
- smaller public sector
- zero level of public debt
- tax cuts
- cap total government spending
- no raise for minimum wage as it "only benefits affluent youth living at home"
- provision of surgical services by private hospitals

in whose interest *anyway?*

When policies are put forward they're usually representing a certain perspective. They are aimed at advancing a particular set of ideas, and they have specific goals in mind. Here are some tough questions to ask from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

1. What objective(s) is the policy intended to serve?

2. Who is supporting the policy?

3. Who is opposing the policy?

4. Have all aspects and potential impacts of the policy been presented?

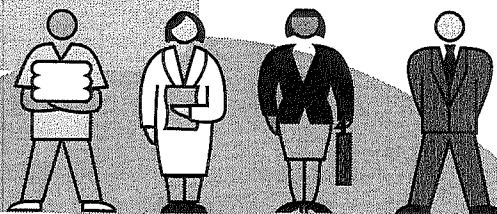
5. Have all the feasible alternatives been considered?

6. How will the policy affect the quality of public programs and services?

7. Does the policy enhance or reduce the accessibility of essential programs and services?

8. Are the rights and interests of workers respected by the policy?

9. What measures are available to ensure that public accountability is maintained?



Headlines and quotes through the decades

1955

Did you know?

Our business as hospital workers was not to create material wealth but to promote the health of the public ... referring to the preamble of HEU's Constitution and By-Laws

1969

Local 180 holds first provincial Wage Policy Conference

What we do here will affect every hospital worker in the province, whether in Local 180 or not.

1975

Barrett challenges opposition

What vested interests are behind that mask of Social Credit? I say never, never again ... Premier Dave Barrett

1983

Unions and the media

The ownership of the mainstream media remains in the hands of a small group of people who certainly are not in favour of any philosophy other than the open private enterprise system ... Robbie Robinson, then an information officer for BCGEU

1993

Ontario labour vows to fight to change NDP

The pain is more intense because it is an NDP government that has violated the principles of collective bargaining and opened up existing collective agreements. It is hard to believe that so many unionists in the government voted as they did ... in an article printed in the wake of the Ontario NDP government's "social contract" and the rights it stripped from the workers of Ontario

50 years of the Guardian

THIS YEAR the *Guardian* proudly celebrates its 50th birthday. Born in March 1950, it had a modest beginning, but it has over the course of those 50 years become a very highly regarded – and award-winning – labour publication.

The *Guardian* took its name from the *Manchester Guardian*, a British newspaper known for high quality journalism and its progressive stance.

"It has long been the intention of the General Office," begins Volume 1, Number 1 of the as-yet-unnamed mimeographed publication, "to publish some form of monthly bulletin which would keep the various sections informed of the activities of the General Office and the many sub-locals within our organization."

And that it did. But its mandate came to be much more than that, reflecting the union's role as not only the champion of the rights of B.C. health care workers, but also fighting for fairness and justice in society at large. A look through old *Guardians* tells us not just about the history of the union, but also the political history of B.C.

In the 1950s, of course, life was very different than it is now, and articles of that era reflect the values of the times.

By perusing a 1955 article by business manager Bill Black, we can see how far we have come: "There are still many fringe benefits not enjoyed by the hospital workers which are enjoyed by other public and industrial workers in the province. They have no group insurance, no medical coverage, no unemployment insurance."

The 1950s and 1960s were a time for building for HEU, culminating with the first single Master Agreement covering 63 of the province's hospitals. In 1969, HEU held its first province-wide Wage Policy Conference. As a matter of fact, said the September 1969 issue of the *Guardian*, it was the first ever such conference held anywhere in Canada.

"Ninety delegates from 68 hospitals spent nine hours hammering out Bargaining Strategy and drafting an ambitious negotiations 'package' covering Local 180's Membership," said that *Guardian*.

The sixties also saw the birth of Medicare. With that in place, hospitals had a secure funding base, and HEU negotiators were able to win fair wages for their members.

By the 1970s the membership base had expanded dramatically, and the organizing continued apace. During this decade HEU cut its ties to CUPE, and consequently, the CLC and the B.C. Federation of Labour. It was a time of isolation for HEU, but also of reflection and leadership-building.

HEU held its first strike in 1971 against a Powell River doctor's clinic. The *Guardian* still doesn't refer to HEU's female members as women and it seems particularly enamoured of capitalization: "The Clinic remains open because two Registered Nurses, a Laboratory Technician, a University Student, and the daughter of one of the Doctors are 'scabbing' the jobs normally performed by the girls on Strike."

The 1980s saw old ties renewed and new ones forged as HEU returned to the fold of the CLC and Operation Solidarity was born. When premier Bill

Bennett introduced his restraint program, rolling back human rights legislation, tenants' rights and the bargaining power of the labour movement, trade unionists and community activists took to the streets, but so did a lot of people who had never been politically active.

The premier eventually backed down on some provisions that specifically attacked public service workers – including HEU members.

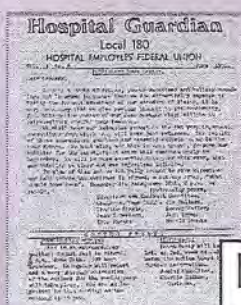
But the Socreds made major changes to the *Labour Code* anyway. The September 1984 *Guardian* referred to the changes as out of the twilight zone. "Taken together, the code changes decisively tip the balance of B.C.'s labour laws in favour of aggressive employers and make labour's fight that much harder."

The end of the 1980s saw a Social Credit government fall in a flame of scandal, and the NDP trounced them in the 1991 election. That decade saw legislation which was certainly more favourable to labour, but the ride was also bumpy sometimes. The government was – and is – under constant attacks from the media, and has sometimes reacted by passing regressive legislation such as the exemption of high tech workers from some provisions of the *Employment Standards Act*.

In 1991 the *Guardian* underwent a major design change. National recognition for outstanding design and content followed with awards from the Canadian Association of Labour Media and the *Georgia Straight*. HEU's communications department's wall is covered with those awards.

A new design change is in the works for the *Guardian*, and it will be launched at the end of this year.

A GRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE GUARDIAN



50s



70s



60s



80s



90s



2000

VOICES

Teachers take brave stance in defense of gay/straight alliance clubs in schools

by Mary-Woo Sims

There was lots of debate about the B.C. Teachers Federation's motion supporting gay/straight alliances in B.C. schools. As the chief commissioner of the B.C. Human Rights Commission I would like to share a few thoughts on this issue.

Gay/straight alliance clubs provide an opportunity for young gay and lesbian students and their straight allies to meet in a safe and supportive environment to discuss things important to them. Discussions between young people help to promote a better understanding, respect and acceptance of their differences.

At the root of this debate is society's tolerance and acceptance of our differences. Instead of respecting, understanding and at a minimum, tolerating our differences, we let them divide and hurt us. It has been rightly pointed out that kids get teased about many things in schools, including their size, their clothing or how smart they are. This argument has been used to defend the position that we should not have separate clubs focusing on homosexuality. Rather, the argument goes, we should have general clubs that deal with anti-bullying or anti-harassment.

Yes, it is important that we address bullying and harassment, but



'We need to make sure our young people know there are options'

it's also critical that marginalized youth have places they can go where they feel safe and comfortable.

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students face isolation, harassment, intimidation and violence at school. In 1999 the McCreary Centre Society released the results of a survey which showed that 37 per cent of gay and lesbian youth feel like outsiders at school. Two-thirds often hear homophobic remarks made by other students at school. Even more upsetting, the survey reports that nearly one in five lesbian and gay youth have been physically assaulted at school in the past year.

This study also found that gay and lesbian youth attempt suicide at a far higher rate than other students. The reason gay or lesbian youth are at a higher risk of suicide is not inherent in being homosexual: it is the way our society treats homosexuality.

We as a society need to do more to make sure discrimination, bullying and harassment are not tolerated in our schools and communities. We need to make sure our young people know there are options other than ending their lives for dealing with their pain and suffering. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students need to know they have other students and teachers they can turn to for support and understanding.

The members of the BCTF have shown great courage in their strong support for gay/straight alliance clubs. Through their support, they can only help to create a safer and more accepting school environment for all students.

Let us help our youth to understand and accept differences rather than help them to perpetuate discrimination and intolerance.

Closures rumoured at troubled Victoria centre

by Margi Blamey

THE RUMOUR that the Victoria Chinatown Care Centre may close due to funding problems has been circulating through the facility and around the city's Chinese community for several weeks.

In order to clarify the situation and help to secure the appropriate funding, HEU wrote to the Victoria Chinatown Care Society, the body that oversees the operation of the fully-funded, long-term care facility, on April 4 and requested a meeting with board members. The board has declined that and subsequent requests but the rumour persists.

HEU members at the Victoria Chinatown Care Centre do expect to hear from the B.C. Human Rights Commission by the middle of May whether or not the union's human rights complaint, filed last fall against the VCCS, will be heard. In the complaint, HEU alleges that some of the centre's Asian employees receive lower wages and fewer benefits than their non-Asian col-

leagues in the same job classification.

Workers are also attempting to resolve long-standing workplace concerns through labour/management meetings with little success. Several resolutions reached with the employer's outside labour relations consultant have been vetoed after-the-fact by facility management who did not take part in discussions.

HEU workers are meeting with MLAs and other local politicians, bureaucrats, and business people and other members of the city's Chinese community to raise awareness of their issues and enlist support to keep the Victoria Chinatown Care Centre open.

The centre opened 18 years ago with generous support from the Chinese community which had lobbied extensively and raised tens of thousands of dollars toward its establishment. VCCS is currently home to 31 residents, the majority of whom are Chinese.

HEU has represented the centre's 23 workers including cooks, housekeepers, care aides, laundry aides and activity aides since June 1999. About half the workers are of Asian origin.

'Workers are meeting with MLAs and other politicians'

Coalition goes to legislature steps

MARILYN RUST PHOTO



PROMISES MADE, PROMISES BROKEN, they say. On May 2 the B.C. Mental Health Monitoring Coalition took the provincial government to task because in the last budget they saw no increase in their funding, even though they were promised 125 million new dollars in the 1998 Mental Health Plan. The coalition is made up of the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Mood Disorders Association and the B.C. Schizophrenia Society. It has been monitoring the plan since its inception, and when the budget came out, they organized the march to let the government know broken promises are unacceptable. The organizers say that although the government has told them the plan is a priority, this is the second year that mental health will not receive any increase in its base budget. They are hoping the march will influence debate on health estimates in the legislature.

HEU launches new anti-stress initiative

"The work keeps piling up and we're never listened to. Some of my co-workers have started fighting with each other - there's lots of nasty rumours and not much cooperation. By the time I get home, I'm so exhausted I just plop on the couch." ... clerical worker, Lower Mainland hospital

"We have staff shortages all the time. Before the cuts we were one staff to five residents. Now it's one to seven. And we have the highest injury rate in the region." ... care aide, Victoria long-term care facility

These HEU members are talking about the most widespread complaint in the workplace today: stress. In response to that, HEU is launching a province-wide Anti-Stress Initiative, the centrepiece of which is its *Workplace Anti-Stress Guide*.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt says that it's time employers woke up and dealt with the escalating problem of stress on the job.

"Stress is an organizational problem that requires an organizational solution," says Allnutt. "Current research

proves that stressed-out workers are sicker, injured more frequently, less productive and subject to high turnover.

"That's the growing reality for HEU members. So, we're moving to address workplace stress before it gets any worse."

The good news is that workplace stress is preventable and fixable. The *Workplace Anti-Stress Guide* is a practical, educational resource that offers concrete recommendations for changing work and the workplace.

"There is plenty HEU members can do together with co-workers, employers, the Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare, government and other organizations to create safer, healthier and more respectful ways of working," says Allnutt. "Healthy jobs and democratic workplaces are good for the future of health care."

• For a copy of HEU's Workplace Anti-Stress Guide, talk to your local executive or contact your HEU servicing representative.

Care aides, LPNs active in National Nursing Week

GET ACTIVE was the theme of National Nursing Week across Canada May 8 to 14, and that's exactly what licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and care aides did to both advocate for health promotion and to highlight the important role they play as part of the nursing team in B.C. hospitals and health care facilities.

An important part of the nursing team in B.C.'s health care system, LPN and care aide activists undertook a number of special activities during the week including:

- blood pressure clinics in malls;
- high school presentations about the importance of preventative health measures and to encourage students to look at nursing as a career path;
- photo displays and information tables in health care facilities;
- information sessions for municipal politicians and administrators.

Many of these activities are joint efforts with registered nurses who are members of the B.C. Nurses' Union.

"All direct care providers are part of the nursing team," says Chris Allnutt, secretary-business manager for the Hospital Employees' Union, which represents care aides and LPNs. "We need to work together to provide high-quality cost effective care, and to develop creative solutions that will address the severe nursing shortage and promote progressive health reform."

Allnutt says Victoria has provided more than \$10 million for a variety of training measures and new LPN and care aide positions in the system.

In addition, the government recently announced a 28 per cent increase in training seats at B.C. colleges, including additional funding to allow care aides to train as LPNs.

HEU represents 4,000 LPNs, and more than 9,000 care aides who provide the bulk of hands-on care looking



LPNS SET UP a blood pressure operation at Brentwood Mall on May 11 in celebration of National Nursing Week. To start the ball rolling, Lions Gate Hospital LPN Michaela Ally checked LPN Linda Copner's (George Derby) blood pressure. Within five minutes, three people sat down to have theirs checked. The next day they set up shop at the Coquitlam Mall.

after seniors in B.C.'s long-term care facilities. HEU's nursing team members also include rehab assistants, who work

to improve the daily lives of seniors and people with disabilities across the province.

2000 walk for democracy

Two thousand people marched through downtown Vancouver on Saturday, April 29 for the Walk for Democracy and Against Corporate Rule. "It was the largest May Day celebration in a decade," says B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair.

The walk was jointly organized by Trading Strategies, B.C. Federation of Labour, the Vancouver and District Labour Council and End the Arms Race. The protest had many targets, which were illustrated with stops along the way with street theatre, music, etc.

As the marchers walked past St. Paul's Hospital, they were treated to a play about cuts to public services, especially health care. The theme at Thurlow and Robson streets was justice for workers. Actors at Burrard and Georgia called for

the redistribution of wealth. "People over profits," they said at Burrard and Cordova. Then up to Cordova and Howe for a cry for corporate free news. And finally, at the art gallery, there was a rally for democracy.

The organizers saw the march as a part of the public's growing awareness of the spectre of unrestricted corporate power that is spreading its shadow all over the world. Events like the protests against the World Trade Organization and the World Bank in Seattle last fall and, more recently, the demonstrations against the International Monetary Fund in Washington D.C., are spawning events like Vancouver's march throughout much of North America and around the globe.

And the walk was the kickoff to a month of activities in the Lower Mainland celebrating workers, their struggles and accomplishments. There will be film, music, dances and discussions throughout the month of May.



CUTS TO HEALTH CARE was the subject of this street theatre group's skit outside St. Paul's Hospital during the Walk for Democracy and Against Corporate Rule.

Morale is high, staff have say in Oliver

We hear so often about the problems in the health care field: excessive workloads, unreasonable management, no opportunity for staff to help improve their work environments. But at McKinney Place in the South Okanagan they are doing things differently.

Under a "shared governance" model, HEU staff are already sharing decisions and responsibility to a greater extent in Oliver than they are in most other facilities in B.C., according to Nancy Graedinger, a researcher HEU hired to investigate this unique work/care environment.

Graedinger found that application of this model came about more by a unique set of circumstances than by design.

At the root of this philosophy of caring is the fact that the facility is the residents' home, and the caregivers respect their dignity and individuality.

The former manager of McKinney Place was a strong believer in sharing ideas. For several months while the manager's position sat empty staff became accustomed to making decisions and problem-solving on their own. When Jo Fleming was hired as manager, it was to manage not only McKinney Place, but two other long-term facilities in the region. Consequently she is not always on site.

Fleming promotes shared responsibility and respect. "I trust the workers to do the best job they can do every day," she says.

"Equally important, the chair of the HEU local has a philosophy based on consultation and cooperation," says Graedinger. "LPN Shirley Coughlin is considered to be a good, common sense leader whose opinions co-workers value." Staff is, she says, always prepared to discuss, to be involved, be-

cause their HEU leader demonstrates this readiness.

This particular set of circumstances has led to a success story in the making. The residents at the three-wing extended care facility are physically frail and have dementia. Caregivers include RNs,

LPNs and care aides. Graedinger says that with this shared governance model, staff and management make decisions about operations and delivery of care at the Nursing Council.

All staff attend the meetings, including those who are not direct caregivers. They have equal input into the agenda and have enough confidence in themselves and their work to put forth their ideas and suggestions.

Recent discussions and actions at council meetings have centred on a new orientation program for incoming staff, a change in the rotation schedule and a restraint policy.

Budget decisions made by council have saved money for the facility — money that they were then able to use to purchase lifts and beds. The long-term effect will be a reduction in on-the-job injuries, staff believes.

"Decisions about what tasks to do, and when, are based on the residents' needs, not on rigid schedules," says Coughlin. Staff and residents know each other. Staff know family members and involve them in care planning.

Caregivers at McKinney Place, like those in other extended care facilities in B.C., are still overworked. They rarely have enough time to socialize with the residents, but do what they can.

Working under this model has had a positive effect of staff morale, efficiency and effectiveness of care and, most importantly, the well-being of residents.

'I trust the workers to do the best job they can'

International solidarity works, says visiting labour leader

Apartheid is gone now, but there are still many obstacles for workers to overcome in South Africa

by Dale Fuller

DELEGATES TO this year's British Columbia Teachers' Federation Annual General Meeting learned first-hand how trade union solidarity of the international variety plays out on the ground. Willie Madisha, president of the Council of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), traveled to Vancouver to personally thank B.C. teachers and tell the delegates how their support helped set up a powerful and effective teachers' union in South Africa — a union that is now 210,000 members strong.

"Under apartheid we were not allowed to have any kind of united trade union movement in South Africa," said Madisha. "But BCTF worked hard to establish links with us, and when we were able to officially launch SADTU in 1990, they were right there with skills training and much needed equipment."

Unhappily, says Madisha, the struggle is far from over for South Africa's working people.

"Workers made sure this democratic government came to power, and it is a government led by our own comrades," he says. "We struggled with them, shared the trenches with them."

But now the same workers are saying that the economic models followed by the government will not assist South Africans in transforming their culture.

"These economic models are borrowed from the developed countries and will not help us in any way," asserts Madisha. Especially alarming are the moves the government is making towards massive privatization of its assets and utilities.

Unemployment is rampant in South Africa at 37 per cent. It is the root cause of widespread poverty and its many attendant problems.

Sixty-two per cent of the unemployed are rural women and youth. They have little or no access to health care and education. Many of the women resort to prostitution to support their families, and they are contracting HIV and AIDS in truly alarming numbers.

The government, in meetings with labour and business leaders, has stated it is aware of the problem but is seemingly unable to come up with solutions.

So, COSATU is offering some solutions of its own. To make its demands difficult to ignore, COSATU along with 40 civil society organizations has been holding rotating job actions since the end of January. The work stoppages — called "stayaways" in South Africa — have been of four hours duration each and have been staged one province at a time. The Johannesburg stayaway was the largest single demonstration since the end of apartheid, with 100,000 workers in the streets. By the time the

Guardian goes to press, these stayaways will have culminated in a massive, nationwide general strike on May 10.

COSATU believes the measures it is putting forward to government would go a long way towards ameliorating the misery caused by such massive unemployment. More diligent government regulation of big business is the keystone of its proposed policy changes.

"Big business is in reality holding an 'investment strike'," says Madisha. "They are not investing in jobs in South Africa, but in the stock markets of Johannesburg, New York and London. Capital serves its own investors; it does not create jobs."

Big corporations — including Canada's Placer Dome — are laying off huge numbers of workers without any regard for their welfare.

COSATU's strategy targets section 189 of the *Retrenchment Act*, which says that while employers must consult with unions before retrenchment (layoffs), they are under no obligation to use this as more than a notice-giving measure. COSATU says unions must be empowered to negotiate the conditions of retrenchment for their members.

Another of COSATU's demands is an immediate review of the *Insolvency Act*, which makes workers the last recipients of the proceeds of liquidated companies.

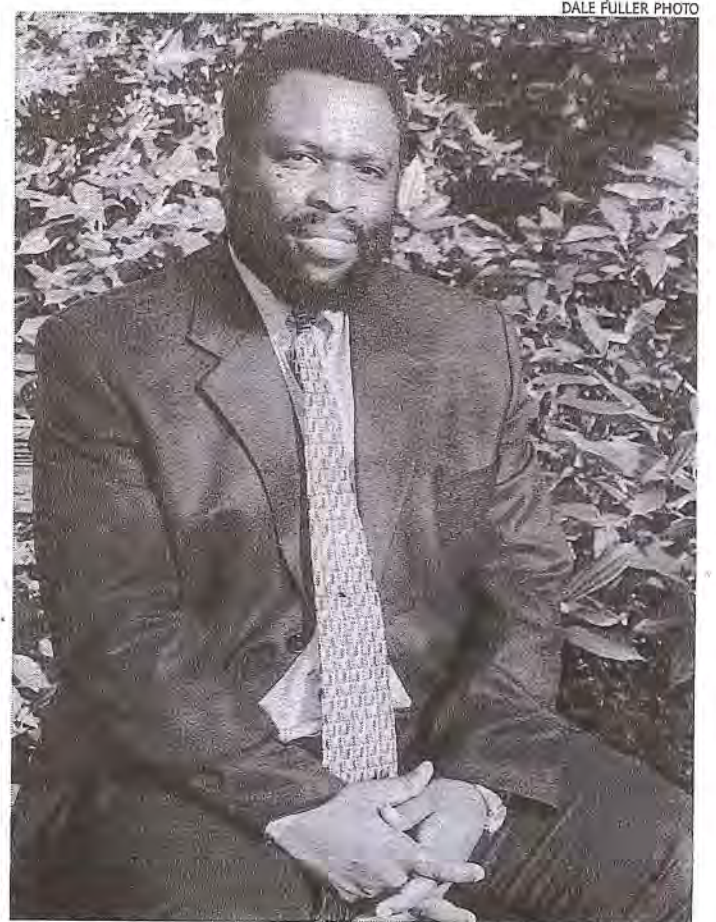
Besides job actions to back up demands for changes in legislation, COSATU has also taken a very impressive step towards creating jobs in the country. It encouraged workers in its affiliates to contribute one day's salary towards a job-creation pool.

"Workers have done that. They have contributed 28 million Rand [\$6,200,000 Canadian]. That money will be used to retrain and provide our workers with multi-skills so they can change employment with facility," says Madisha.

Since rural women and youth suffer from the highest unemployment, the money will also be used to set up cooperatives in rural areas. The investment will pay off in family-supporting wages for them.

"Labour is doing its part. Now it is up to government and big business to do theirs," says Madisha.

COSATU is made up of organizations that fight for social justice and the transformation of their society, and that work will never end. "Our workers are concerned about workers' rights everywhere," he says. "We know that that is the case with workers in Canada, too, because we were able to benefit in a very real way from their solidarity."



DALE FULLER PHOTO

WILLY MADISHA was in Vancouver to talk to the BCTF delegates, but he took advantage of the opportunity to speak to other labour groups as well. He attended a meeting of HEU's VGH local to bring them up-to-date on what is happening in his country.

This is an excerpt of a letter sent by HEU president Fred Muzin on behalf of HEU members in support of the COSATU job actions:

On behalf of the 46,000 members of the Hospital Employees' Union in Canada, I am writing to express our solidarity with our COSATU sisters and brothers as you join together for the historic May 10 general strike.

While we celebrate the collapse of apartheid, the ongoing problems of South Africa cannot be ignored. Four and a half million adults are out of work and poverty levels are intolerable, with over half the population below the poverty line.

The situation continues to worsen as business interests and the wealthy invest in the stock market and profit ventures rather than rebuilding the economy. Corporations are using globalization and regressive economic policies to exploit workers and their families.

Your demonstrations since January are sending a clear message to the government and business class. Workers and the unemployed are united and strong. COSATU and the South African people have overcome amazing hurdles in the past, and you will win again.

We applaud the actions of COSATU members and your allies, and we are honoured to add our voices to those around the world who support your demands for jobs, justice and dignity for South African workers.

In solidarity, Fred Muzin, President



Health care workers are also affiliated with COSATU through their membership in the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union. With 232,000 members, it is the second largest component of COSATU, after the miners' union.

NEHAWU sees its role as being the watchdog for health care reform in the country, in-

forming members of parliament what South Africa needs in the way of health care reform.

Right now there is a basic Medicare program in place which closely resembles the American system. Pregnant women and children under six all have the right to free comprehensive health care.

The main problem, says Madisha, is that public health care is not properly resourced by government. Policies on paper are one thing; the reality is another.

JUNE 11-14

CLC 11th National Women's Conference.

JUNE 21

Aboriginal Recognition Day.

JUNE 24

15th Annual Miners' Memorial Day observance in Cumberland.

JULY 17, 8:30 a.m.

Deadline for locals to submit credentials for Convention, accommodation forms, constitutional amendments and resolutions.

JULY 24

Deadline for locals to submit credentials for Wage Policy Conference.

AUGUST 23

Deadline for locals to submit proposed bargaining demands and resolutions for Wage Policy Conference.

AUGUST 30

All proposed constitutional amendments and resolutions circulated to locals.

OCTOBER 7

All proposed bargaining demands and resolutions for Wage Policy Conference circulated to locals.

OCTOBER 15-20

HEU 22nd Biennial Convention, Richmond Inn.

OCTOBER 23-25

15th Wage Policy Conference, Richmond Inn.

RNs sing their message

by Dale Fuller

ANOTHER musical about all the heartbreak, joys and frustrations of being a health care worker in this day and age is making its way around the province. Following HEU's example, the British Columbia Nurses' Union is using this medium to get their message out with *Hurl, Hemorrhage and Heal*.

The play is part of the BCNU's Valuing Nurses' Work campaign aimed at educating the public about how the workload crisis has resulted from nursing shortages — with RNs working an unprecedented amount of overtime.

Another important part of the campaign is leveled at reducing the number of non-nursing duties performed by RNs — work that belongs to HEU members.

Regional BCNU local meetings precede performances and public discussions follow. Health care decision-makers are invited to attend to see what effect their decisions have on life and work in a health care facility; presented in an entertaining way, of course.

The complicated plot — with an all-

RN cast — interweaves contemporary concerns about health care and RNs' work with a historical context.

Talk of goddesses, healers and witches winds throughout the play, giving it a mythological backdrop and a sense of nursing history beyond Florence Nightingale.

The cast of characters is made up of nurse prototypes: the young stars-in-her-eyes recent graduate who sees being "capped" as akin to winning a beauty contest; the older, wiser nurse in her Florence Nightingale outfit; the middle-aged alternately kind and angry nurse; the level-headed, practical but still idealistic nurse (who is also the union rep).

The sole male cast member at times plays the hospital administrator and at other times patients, but he relates his experiences as a male nurse in an aside.

And the other characters do this, too. Stepping out of character, facing the audience and telling real stories.

BCNU, as did HEU in its own plays (*The Heart of Health Care*, *A Change of Heart* and *Begin the Healing*), collected these stories from its members.

The play gets the message out loud and clear.

Although, the RNs in the audience responded especially enthusiastically to an adaptation of the Beatles' *We Want Money*, there were nods, clapping and murmurs of agreement throughout the play when workload and its consequences were so dramatically illustrated. (Using LPNs to help lighten the



LOOKING NONE TOO HAPPY, nurses played by Pamela Miller and Colleen O'Neil, tend to patient Vince Manfre while Jalisa Pankanea plays the vibes and Alison Jenkins, the accordion.

RNs' workload was unfortunately not explored in the plot.)

One advantage of having union members as the actors was the after-play discussion, where actors entertained ques-

tions from the audience. Two of them told how difficult it was to get time off work to tour with the play. But their co-

workers arranged it so they could cover their shifts while they were gone — shouldering even heavier workloads — because they recognized the importance of what the actors were doing.

HEU members will recognize the name of director Steven Hill, who directed and appeared in HEU's productions. Wyckham Porteus, who has also worked on HEU productions, composed the music for all but the *We Want Money* piece. Actors were Colleen O'Neil, Vince Manfre, Pamela Miller, Marianne Sawchuk and Cynthia Quinn-Young. The musicians were superb: Alison Jenkins and Jalisa Pankanea.

'The play gets the message out loud and clear'

COMING UP ON WORKING TV

May 19 — *Breaking the Bank*, Part 1, on the protests against the World Bank and the IMF in Washington D.C. (April 16/17); May 26 — Part 2

June 2 and June 9 — tba, local issues

June 16 — *Born to be Wild*, Part 1, the June 10 Vogue Theatre Benefit for whales in captivity at the Vancouver Aquarium; June 23 — Part 2

June 30 — *On to Ottawa*, Part 1; July 7 — Part 2

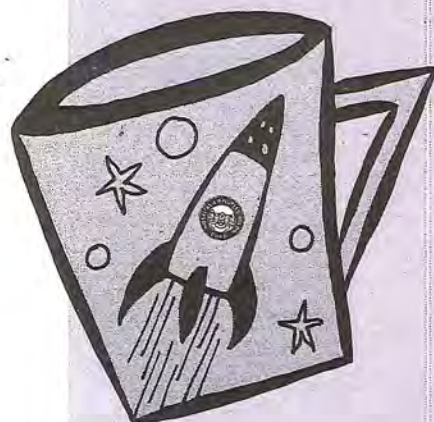
July 14 — *Showdown in Seattle*, Part 1; July 21 — Part 2; July 28 — Part 3;

August 4 — Part 4; August 11 — Part 5 (all repeats)

Regular broadcast times for Working TV are Fridays at 7:30 p.m. and Mondays at 8:30 p.m. in the Lower Mainland on Rogers Cable TV; Tuesdays at 9 p.m., Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8 p.m. on Catena Cable TV (Kimberley and Fernie) and now on air in 50 American cities. And don't miss the Working TV website at www.workingtv.com.



Coffee break



All stories guaranteed factual. Sources this issue: Straight Goods, CNN, Internet.



Funny signs of the times

- In a Bucharest hotel lobby: The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.
- In a Paris hotel elevator: Please leave your values at the front desk.
- On the menu of a Swiss restaurant: Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.
- In an advertisement by a Hong Kong dentist: Teeth extracted by the latest Methodists.

- In a Swiss mountain inn: Special today — no ice cream.
- In a Copenhagen airline ticket office: We take your bags and send them in all directions.
- In a Budapest zoo: Please do not feed the animals. If you have any suitable food, give it to the guard on duty.

Same time next year?

From a passenger ship, everyone can see a bearded man on a small island who is shouting and desperately wav-

ing his hands.
"Who is it?" a passenger asks the captain.
"I've no idea. Every year when we pass, he just goes nuts."

What's up, doc?

A man's doctor told him one day, "I have bad news and worse news."
"Give me the bad news first," the man said.
The doctor replied, "The bad news is, you only have 24 hours to live."
"What?!? That's terrible!"

What could possibly be worse?"
The doctor's answer: "I've been trying to reach you since yesterday."

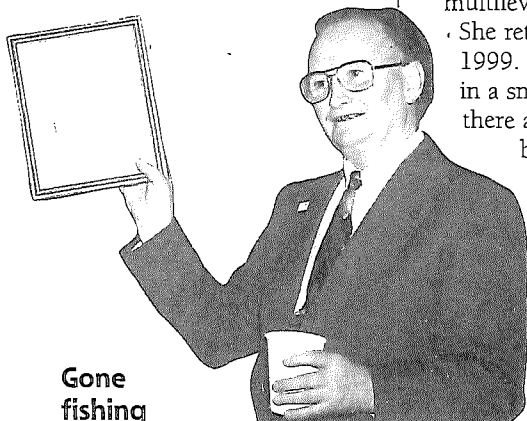
Ahead of herself

A: One.
Q: How many psychics does it take to change a lightbulb?

Two-tier bankruptcies

A bill before the United States Congress would place some heavy restrictions on Americans' ability to declare bankruptcy. Even more than there are now.
One argument the opponents of this bill are putting forth is that 40 per cent of all bankruptcies in the U.S. are the result of medical bills that American health care users cannot pay.
And that's after they sell all their assets.

HEU people



Gone fishing

Clarke Gardner has retired after nearly 35 years as an HEU member at Lion's Gate Hospital. And judging from the good-natured roasts he received at his retirement reception at the North Shore Legion this past March, he'll be missed. He is "the man with the biggest heart," explains one local activist.

Gardner had a province-wide profile within the HEU, serving on the 86-88 provincial bargaining committee, and seeing the 80s through as a member of the Provincial Executive. His proudest moment in the union? Operation Solidarity.

Gardner claims to be "watching the world go by" during his first few months of retirement. But after some prodding, he admits to fishing and spending time with his mother, children and grandchildren.

Traumatic start to New Year

The good news is that Kathie Anderson is okay.

The bad news is that her house burned down New Year's Day.

Anderson awoke to the fire at 3 a.m. Some family members had gone out to a party and they had not arrived back home. But Anderson didn't know that. She got out of the house but ran back in twice when she didn't see the missing family members. She was burnt and suffered from smoke and chemical inhalation. When she heard her daughter say, "Mum, we're here," she then consented to be taken to the hospital, where she stayed for 16 days, four of them in ICU.

"I retired last July from 38 years of working at Lions Gate, then in January my house, where I lived for 46 years, burnt down. Within the space of six months the two points of stability in my life disappeared."

But the most important thing is that everyone is okay. "I complain about replacing my dishes," she says. "But I'm just so happy I didn't have to go to any funerals."

Community activities in the forecast for LPN

Elizabeth Seel, an LPN at Invermere and District Hospital, started working in acute care in 1981 and moved to multilevel care in 1994.

She retired on Dec. 31, 1999. She says she lives in a small community and there are many ways to be involved. "I plan to fill my days with all the things I could not find time for when I was working," she says. She looks forward to travel, crafts, sewing,

reading, drawing, painting and learning to play a musical instrument.

Retired but not retiring

Dorothy Parsons joined HEU in 1972, but she began working at RJH in 1961 — first in the admitting department and then emergency department. In 1970 she started at the switchboard as a part-time operator; and at her retirement she was the switchboard supervisor.

She plans to do the three "Gs" during her retirement: gardening, golfing and goofing off. She also plans to do a little traveling with her son who is a long-haul truck driver.

Another Royal Jubilee retirement

Don Village has retired after 36 years of service at Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. He started out in 1964 with Veterans Hospital. Upon retirement he was a housekeeper at Memorial Pavilion. He wasn't an activist in the sense that he held any offices, but he attended meetings regularly over the entire 36 years. His sisters and brothers in the union knew him as someone who "was always there to help out." They say they will miss him and his daily supply of gum.

Vi is her name, tennis is her game

Vi Campbell, who worked at Campbell River and District Hospital for 18 years as an LPN and lab aide, has retired. During her tenure at the facility, she says, she held just about every local office.

She is a qualified tennis instructor and intends to keep this up through her retirement. She's planning to buy a camper just to make getting to tennis tournaments easier.

"I thank HEU for the opportunity to attend semi-

nars. The best was summer school — priceless knowledge which I'll value all my life," she says.

Another 50th anniversary

Nanaimo General Regional Hospital held a "let's eat cake" party in celebration of the 50th anniversary of their certification, which took place on Dec. 7, 1949. They held the party on Feb. 14. The local is made up of Kiwanis Care Home, Dufferin Place ECU and NGRH and the satellite lab.



LPNs Judy Clifford and Caron Hudson, who both work as care aides, happily partake of the feast.

Staff appointments

Teressa Prentice began working at HEU's Provincial Office in December 1998 as a temporary rep. She was recently appointed as a permanent rep trainee. Originally from the Vancouver area, Prentice began her career as a food services supervisor at Queen's Park Hospital in New

Westminster. She became actively involved in the union, serving as chair of her local many times. She also is a strong OH&S advocate. Prentice is the mother of three very lively sons.

Chris Dorais is another new rep trainee in the Provincial Office, Vancouver site. He worked as a receptionist scheduler at Kiwanis Care Centre in North Vancouver for 10 years before coming to HEU. Many HEU members may know him as a member of the provincial bargaining committee during the last round of facilities bargaining.

Paul St. Denis is the new face in the HEU's computer department and comes to Provincial Office from the South Fraser Health Region, where he worked as a systems engineer for five years. Originally from Ontario, St Denis is married with two children, an 18-year-old son and an 11-year-old daughter.

• Send us your news about retirements, special celebrations at your local, and submissions for obituaries of HEU members.

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Ethnic Diversity

One union, many colours! Working across our differences! To participate, please call and leave us your name!



press 2

First Nations

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



press 3

Lesbians and Gays

For support: afraid of being identified, feeling isolated, want to know your rights? Call for information on same sex benefits, fighting homophobia and discrimination.



press 4

People with disAbilities

We'd like to hear from you, if you are on WCB or LTD. Or if you are invisibly or visibly disabled in the workplace, let us know how the union can better meet your needs.



ALL CALLS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

TALK TO US ... TOLL-FREE!

You can call any HEU office toll free to deal with a problem or to get information. It's fast, it's easy and it's free.

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- Abbotsford site
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OKANAGAN OFFICE:

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VANCOUVER ISLAND OFFICES:

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HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION



MODERNIZE, DON'T
PRIVATIZE MEDICARE

On May 10, 2000 Medicare supporters showed up on the Vancouver Club's doorstep to protest the health care privatization meeting that was going on inside.

[Click here for the full story...](#)

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CHECK HERE FIRST

HEU calls for investigation of private lab's billing practices.

[Click here](#)

Rock can no longer stall on Bill 11, say B.C. health care unions.

[Click here](#)

HEU launches anti-stress initiative to turn around rising on-the-job injuries.

[Click here](#)

Guardian



VOL. 18 NO. 2

THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

APRIL/MAY 2000



Hep C strikes HEU family

Nanaimo local member Karen Park was shocked that her husband was on his own after being diagnosed with Hep C.

PAGE 4



HEU tackles privatization

Harris' "common sense revolution" comes under HEU's microscope.

PAGE 5



Farmworkers need help

A call from agricultural workers for a boycott to help them in their struggle.

PAGE 7



South African unemployment

Willie Madisha, president of the Council of South African Trade Unions, tells how globalization affects his country.

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