

Guardian



SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2000 • VOLUME 18 NUMBER 3 • THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION



We can do it best

HEU releases an important new guide to bringing contracted out services back in house.

PAGE 10

Flying high

Feminist Joan Meister overcame obstacles that stood in her way.

PAGE 4

Doctors withdraw services

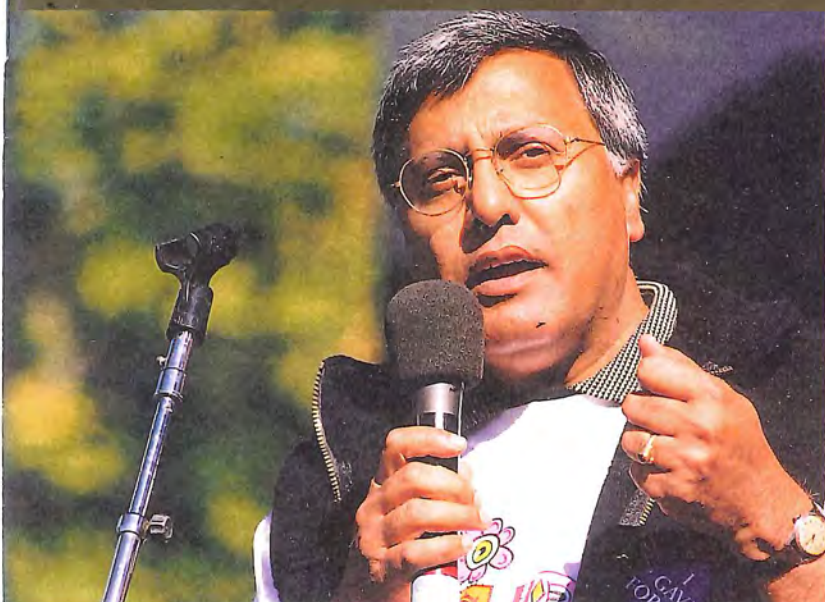
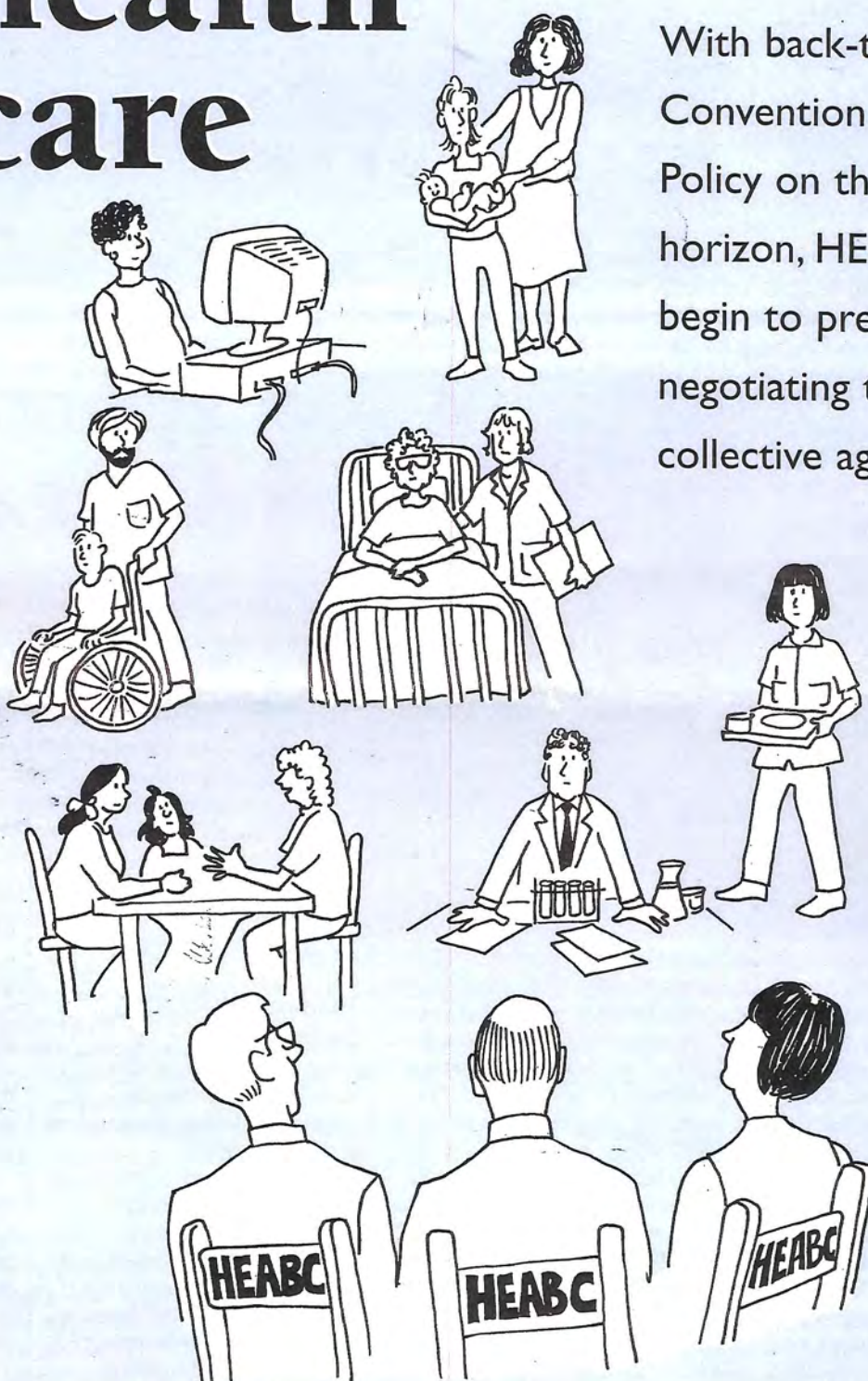
Although B.C. doctors have no collective agreement, many used union tactics and withdrew their services during the summer and early fall. PAGE 3

Poultry workers struggle

UFCW workers are engaged in a bitter fight against Superior Poultry. PAGE 11

Our future, our health care

With back-to-back Convention and Wage Policy on the immediate horizon, HEU members begin to prepare negotiating their next collective agreements



GUARDIAN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

CAN UJJAL TURN IT AROUND?

British Columbia Premier Ujjal Dosanjh faces an uphill struggle in the run-up to a provincial election. We talked to him about where health care fits in the picture.

COMMENT

Get ready for the battles that lie ahead

by Chris Allnutt



LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE is a difficult task, but as we head into a Convention and Wage Policy Conference and the next round of bargaining we must try. We must also look at the past, celebrate our victories and learn from our failures.

With a provincial election to be called in the not-too-distant future, there are many uncertainties on the horizon. But I am confident that HEU and its members are up to the challenges of a possibly adverse change in government.

It's not easy being a union activist in the year 2000. We're under constant attack in the corporate controlled media. But we've learned how to fight for what we want and believe in, and we've developed a depth of activism over the last 10 years under the NDP government that will stand us in good stead for the battles that lie ahead. We will set our own agenda at Convention and Wage Policy, and I am confident that we will emerge still fighting for fair wages, benefits, safe working conditions for our members and public Medicare. We will also continue to fight for social justice. As health care workers we see

ourselves as the helpers of those who are ill, injured or disabled, yes, but also those who are needy in other ways. Like the poor. Like seniors and young people. Like workers in other lands who struggle against unjust governments or corporations. And we want our union to care about those people, too.

We have reason to celebrate our victories on pay equity, our winning of employment security, our model

social services contract, our advocacy for modernizing Medicare, our pride in the return of the Nursing Team, the establishment of the Occupational Health and Safety Agency and our efforts to take down the wall between the community and facility health sectors (this will come to fruition in the next round of bargaining, with an agreement we've reached with BCGEU and UFCW).

There were obstacles we were not able to overcome. The boss is still hurting us – with the number of injuries rising by 12 per cent between 1995 and 1999. Wages did not keep pace with the rate of inflation. These must be made right.

In the process of fighting for our future and our health care, HEU members have gained a mountain of respect while working cooperatively and supportively with seniors on Medicare,

with members of the disability community on rehab services, with churches on fighting the World Trade Organization, with women on pay equity issues and with students on education cutbacks. We have a fighting approach that not only slams bad ideas, but proposes credible, concrete alternatives.

I am confident we'll come out of Wage Policy and Convention with our membership solid and ready to bargain.

'HEU members have gained a mountain of respect'

voice/mail

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Contract came from CUPE 401

It seems strange that I have to thank the Nanaimo president of CUPE 401 for the fact that I now have in my hands a copy of my collective agreement. Over the course of the two years since we've signed the agreement I had asked my shop steward when we were getting our copies and was always reassured that they would become available.

In January 2000, as an ill worker, I needed information and I phoned every office of HEU available to me – from a local shop steward to the Provincial Office – and was passed along back to where I started from, our local office.

The president of CUPE 401 heard about this and asked if he could help. He had a difficult time, but through a very circuitous route of enquiries and channels, I now have my copy. This is an item every member of HEU is entitled to without running into roadblocks and HEU failed to provide the members with a very basic tool.

ELIZABETH CHAPMAN,
Nanaimo

Let's use our nursing team

During my time spent with the Nursing Team I was very shocked to hear from Care Aides and LPNs about the extreme work load issues they face on a daily basis. We desperately need more nursing power to help our members cope and reduce their injury rate.

Another item that boggled my mind was the difference in facilities not letting their LPNs work to their full scope of practice. They say we have a nursing shortage. Well I say we have an educational shortage. If Care Aides and LPNs could be upgraded there would be no longer a nursing shortage, and no need to close beds or transfer patients to other hospitals. I agree that not all health care workers need to or want to upgrade, but let's not stand in the way of those of us that do.

PEGGY EMERSON,
LPN, Quesnel (G.R. Baker)

A modest proposal

Beyond addressing workload and wage issues, there is a very simple measure to deal with health care staffing shortages that has been overlooked.

Those who chose to enter the health care field in which there are recognized shortages of qualified staff should be given the following choices – to pay for the training themselves, in which case they could work wherever they wish, including outside the province, or to accept the training at no cost.

Those choosing the latter would

agree to work within the B.C. health care system for the equivalent of at least 10 years at full-time hours, with violation resulting in the cancellation of licences, with certain reasonable exceptions. This would have the additional benefit of making training available to those who would otherwise not be able to afford it.

TONY WILDEMAN,
LPN, Vernon

Thanks, but no thanks

In a recent HEU newsletter to members entitled "Mayday is Payday" (Pay Equity), paragraph six of that letter reads:

"The total amount of interest due remains in dispute. Once this dispute has been resolved, all who are facilities sector members as of May 1, 2000 will receive a flat dollar amount pro-rated based on the hours worked between April 1, 1999 and March 31, 2000."

Paragraph seven reads:

"Paying interest to all members recognizes that all members deserve compensation for non-wage elements of comparability with the direct government service including hours of work and pensions. And all members have played a role in this pay equity win."

This action, in the collective view of the B.C. Hospital Trades and Maintenance Workers' Association board of directors of which I am chair, is an unacceptable course of action for the union to take, since interest on retroactive pay belongs only to those persons due such pay and not any others.

Accordingly, the board of directors that were present at our June 14 meeting, voted unanimously to decline (as individuals), any such payments.

BRIAN SMITH,
Millwright,
Lions Gate Local

Now she can build bridges

I would like to thank HEU for giving me the opportunity to attend the Building Bridges Women's Health Conference in Victoria April 28 to May 1, 2000. It was a wonderful experience, and there were so many interesting workshop topics to choose from.

Professional women such as research scientists, doctors, lawyers, nurses and many other health professionals spoke about changes in health care and of the many complex situations women face every day.

I think the most eye-opening experience was of a young woman who had been caught up in prostitution since the age of 13. Her remarkable story was relayed with barely a dry eye in the auditorium. I realized each woman there had her own individual story of overcoming barriers, finding a niche in the world where she could make a difference and be happy doing so.

It was the most wonderful conference I've ever attended. When I feel sometimes overwhelmed and exasperated in my daily life, I just have to think back to what these women have had to endure, and I feel a renewed spirit.

SYLVIA DAVIES,
Care Aide, Cariboo Lodge

Guardian

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

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What we're up to

Medicare alert in Prince George

On June 14, our members of the Prince George local were among thousands of health care workers and other Medicare advocates across Canada who demonstrated to demand immediate action by Ottawa to stop privatization of Medicare.

The National Day of Warning was organized by CUPE, the National Union of Public and General Employees, the Canadian Federation of Nurses'



Prince George HEU members Sandra Ford, Sharon Staab, Lois Doran, Maureen Kingdon, Jessica Breaks and northern regional director John Hurren, joined Canadians across the country for the National Day of Warning.

Unions, and the Service Employees International Union.

In B.C. demonstrations took place in Victoria, Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, Kelowna, Kamloops and Nelson as well as Prince George.

A bench for Davies

In the September/October, 1999 issue of the *Guardian*, we published an obituary of Bob Davies, a much-loved member of the VGH local.

After his untimely death, VGH staff took up a collection to purchase a park bench dedicated to Davies. The little park across the street from the facility was chosen as the site for the bench.

Davies' family members, VGH local members and other staff of the facility, as well as union officials attended the dedication ceremony on Aug. 23.

Davies' wife Meryl said, "I appreciate this more than anybody. I was the one who lived with him. He really did march to a different drummer. He would be so pleased to see all of you here. I am also a union member, and now that I am retired I can really appreciate all the struggles that HEU went through to win the rights I am enjoying right now."

The plaque says, "In memory of Robert (Bob) Davies. We shall never forget the unselfish



Meryl Davies unveils the bench's plaque.

dedication of our friend and co-worker. He spent his life helping others. He now rides a different kind of wing. And is probably helping friends out up there. We miss you."

continued on page 4

NDP funding boost is good news, says HEU

THE injection of an additional \$250 million in health care funding by Premier Ujjal Dosanjh in mid-September is an important first-step in a long-range plan to heal problems in the system, protect against privatization threats, and modernize Medicare, says HEU president Fred Muzin.

"We're pleased with the NDP's funding initiative," says Muzin. "Health care providers have been working under tremendous pressure to keep our system going, so the addition of new funds will help ease that strain. And increasing the capacity of hospital operating rooms to deal with wait list pressures will protect against privatization."

Muzin also praised the leadership role Dosanjh played in recent First Ministers' discussions in Ottawa that

closed the deal for over \$20 billion more in federal health funding in the next five years. "Our premier was the only one who raised the alarm around privatization," he said.

The \$250 million announcement, which includes \$180 million for hospitals and an additional \$70 million for equipment purchases, is part of a long range government action plan that HEU anticipates will include future funding boosts for continuing care programs for seniors and the disabled, and a much needed increase for home support.

About \$10 million of the equipment fund is earmarked for health and safety equipment purchases in the workplace. "If employers purchase the right equipment it will have an impact on reducing the injury crisis," says Muzin.

Health authorities will coordinate purchases with the Occupational Health



WHEN PREMIER Dosanjh entered the Sept. 11 First Ministers' meeting in Ottawa, CUPE president Judy Darcy and Medicare advocate Shirley Douglas encouraged him to press for an agreement on health care funding to strengthen public health care. "Dosanjh was the only premier at the meeting to call for an end to the encroachment of privatization in health care," says Darcy.

and Safety Agency for Healthcare and Muzin encouraged HEU OH&S acti-

vists to work at the local level to set equipment priorities.

Key appeal won, unions go after wall

While HEU won a landmark victory in its appeal of a Labour Relations Board decision on the transfer of members to the paramedical sector under Bill 28, the union is stepping up its efforts with two sister unions to press Victoria to remove the wall between the community and facilities bargaining units.

HEU along with CUPE and BCGEU had launched an appeal of a 1998 labour board ruling which held that when health services and support employees are declared to be paramedical professionals they automatically become members of the Health Sciences Association.

But in the appeal ruling in late July, the board said the original decision was flawed, and agreed that employees retain membership in the union they belonged to before the transfer.

"We're very happy with the outcome," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt, "because it restores the authority of Bill 28, which set out a fair process for transfer between bargaining units."

Meanwhile, Allnutt says HEU, BCGEU, IUOE, and the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1518 are making headway in their efforts to get government to remove the wall between the community and facilities sectors and create one bargaining unit for health and support workers.

"Working together has been an extremely positive experience," he says. "We're confident that we'll be able to move government the final step to knock down the artificial barrier between these sectors."

Docs' job actions not legit

More than 300 rural physicians and specialists have withdrawn services at hospitals across the province. They've used union strategies and terminology to back their concerns about heavy workloads and insufficient pay while strongly opposing the formation of a doctors' union and the responsibilities that would come with it. However, the doctors' walk-outs are a far cry from legitimate job actions by unionized health care workers during bargaining rounds.

HEU members and others in health care are represented by their unions, exclusive bargaining agents which together form sanctioned bargaining associations. Members abide by the collective bargaining process and honour their agreements. Specific procedures

govern strike votes, notices of job actions, and essential services levels.

In contrast, the rural doctors are not bound by procedures and protocols.

They've rejected the B.C. Medical Association as their representative, opted-out of the existing BCMA/government contract and rejected a \$40,000,000 deal made between BCMA and Victoria in September. They've withdrawn services and left it to other health care workers to deal with the consequences.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt says it's time to look for answers to improve health care in B.C. communities that include better use of the nursing team, community health centres, increased home support and reducing on-the-job injuries to workers.

'They've used union strategies and terminology'

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

continued from page 3

Queens Park gets a lift

This past summer, a small ceremony took place at Queens Park Hospital in New Westminster to celebrate the initiation of the Comprehensive

Ceiling Lift Program in Continuing Care. The CCLP program is the result of months of work by the Regional Occupational Health and Safety Committee. HEU and the management at the facility made a proposal to the Workers' Compensation Board for a pilot

project which would put ceiling lifts in the 75-bed unit at Queens Park Care Centre.

The proposal was backed up with injury and WCB claim statistics, putting forward the economic argument that there would be cost savings if it was approved. The WCB approved the project a year ago, to be sponsored by Simon Fraser Health Region, WCB and HEABC, with a budget of \$272,000.

Chris Allnutt, HEU secretary-business manager, says, "The OH&S committee at Queens Park was successful in taking a comprehensive approach to the way they deliver care, and WCB, HEABC and SFHR listened to them."

Productive term at end

The Professional and Technical Committee is coming to the end of its current term.

At its final meeting, it reviewed the past two years and put forward budget recommendations for next year's activities.

"This year has been productive and committee members have worked hard to advance the cause of HEU members in their classifications," says committee chair David Ridley.

Over 40 participants from all over the province attended a two-day conference in the spring to discuss problems. Sessions were lively, says Ridley, and judging by the evaluation forms, most found the experience valuable.

The Provincial Executive reached an agreement with the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of B.C. to work together on common interests.

Many biomedics belong to IBET, a branch of this association, and it is hoped this is only



HEU's Ria VandenVen, Fred Muzin and Louella Vincent get into the spirit at the Vancouver Gay Pride parade on Aug. 6. VandenVen and Vincent work at Western Human Resources in the Lower Mainland.



Boni Amero and Rita Rossi of William Rudd Residence in Queens Park, New Westminster are happy to demonstrate the new ceiling-mounted lift at the facility.

one of several cooperative ventures between the union and other associations involved in health care.

Ridley thanks the members of the committee for their hard work and input over the last two years.

She turned adversity to opportunity

by Dale Fuller

As a young student activist at Simon Fraser University, Joan Meister started a journey. She had no idea where the road would lead, nor that eventually she would travel it not walking, but in a wheelchair.

"SFU in the 1970s was a happening, political place," says Meister. "That was where I became aware of the bigger picture, and where I fit in it."

After she earned her honors degree in English, she landed a job at the university's library. Her union was the Association of University and College Employees, AUCE.

BALANCING



IT ALL

pencils." This was the first meeting of what turned out to be 18 months of negotiations, followed by a six-week strike.

Soon afterwards she was elected to a staff position at her union. But then her life took an unexpected turn. Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, she left her new job and went on long-term disability. And began life in a wheelchair. She was 30 years old.

It wasn't long before Meister made an interesting discovery. "I had been involved with the women's movement the whole time I was doing all this other stuff. When I started using a wheelchair, I realized that the women's movement, and for that matter the labour movement, just didn't get it about access and disability," she says.

The disability community didn't look at things from a feminist perspective, either.

"I found most of the political work I had done before was suddenly inaccessible to me. My former world had too many stairs," she says.

Meister figured a new organization was in order. So she and some other women in the same situation

Meister attended a meeting to find out about contract negotiations that were set to begin. Little did she know that was tantamount to volunteering to be on the bargaining committee.

"They gave me a binder, a pad of paper and two sharp



MEISTER AND SOUVESTRE are all smiles upon landing after her first trip on a soarer, a type of glider that uses updrafts rather than downdrafts. "We were catching the thermals, playing with the air," she says.

formed the Disabled Women's Network Canada, DAWN Canada, in 1987.

As the first national chair of DAWN Canada, she spent nine years meeting with bureaucrats and politicians, supervising projects, answering phones and flying to Ottawa and other cities.

She and her colleagues did some innovative research about disabled women. One of the things they found is that women with disabilities are twice as likely to have suffered from abuse as non-disabled women.

Disabled women are poor and very isolated; they are unemployed or underemployed; mothering is difficult, because partners often leave: these were all issues that turned up in DAWN Canada's research.

Meister is the first to acknowledge that they were inexperienced researchers, and were learning as they went. Still, she says, it was groundbreaking research, and it attracted attention.

Another project that came to fruition under her guidance is *DAWNing, How to Start and Maintain a Group*, an invaluable guide for women who want to form their own DAWN groups for support, companionship and to bring about change for the disabled. (HEU members can also call the People with Disabilities Standing Committee - see page 15.)

'My former world had too many stairs'

Lately, Meister has been working with DAWN Pacific and the B.C. Centre of Excellence for Women's Health on a soon-to-be-released report on midlife health issues for women with disabilities. "Before this study, no one had ever thought to ask middle-aged disabled women about their problems," says Meister.

The most recent project in her life is Kickstart - a Celebration of Disability Arts and Culture. "I've just joined and it's different for me. In one year's time disabled artists from all across the country will arrive in Vancouver for this event."

For locomotion, Meister usually relies on Sparky, her power wheelchair, on which she can travel 20 miles at a time. But recently she had quite another experience.

Meister calls Dr. Philippe Souvestre her alternate healer. He has worked with her to help rid herself of painful muscle spasms. He is also a pilot. "One day he asked me if I would like to go up in his soarer." She didn't believe him at first, but he wasn't kidding. "It was so wonderful. I wasn't afraid; I trusted him implicitly," she says.

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

WHAT WE'RE UP TO



MARGI BLAMEY PHOTO

On May 24, HEU students from Kensington Private Hospital graduated from HLAA's Basic Education and Skills Training program.

Guide helps access training

HEU now has a resource guide to help members access funding from the Health Labour Adjustment Agency for training programs and basic skills upgrading.

It's divided into two sections. The first section provides a step-

by-step explanation for getting a training program up and running and includes: a sample survey for HEU members interested in training; tips on how to work with employers, the HLAA and learning institutions; how to write a training proposal and a checklist covering all these steps.

The second section offers summaries of sample HEU training proposals that have been, or are in the process of being, funded by the HLAA. These summaries will help members choose the training program that best meets their needs. There are proposals for these work/education areas: activity aide, basic skills (BEST), dietary, information technology, nursing and unit clerk.

Full proposals are available by contacting Kerry Anderson in the Provincial Office at (604) 714-1584 or 1-800-663-5813, extension 584.

Stompin' Chaos

On Sept. 9, the Canadian Labour Congress and the B.C. Federation of Labour sponsored a youth festival called Stompin' Chaos in downtown Vancouver. It was modeled on the successful festival the CLC held last year in Toronto.



DALE FULLER PHOTO

A smiling Jennifer Neely, chair of the Victoria's Kardel local, was at the HEU table at the recent Stompin' Chaos Youth Festival to hand out leaflets, stickers and buttons. Not to mention the munchies!

Many unions and progressive youth organizations set up tables in the ice rink at Robson Square. Although it was pouring rain, there was a small →

and mostly youthful — crowd at the event. HEU's table was the most popular as someone had the foresight to bring chips, cheesies and pretzels.

40,000 receive pay equity

MARK SEPT. 8 as a "red letter day for more than 40,000 HEU members who received \$100 million in retroactive pay equity adjustments after a four-year wait. "It's a milestone on the decades-long road to achieving gender-neutral pay rates in health care," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. HEU members in the facilities sector received gross payments ranging as high as \$9,600 to cover the four-year period from April, 1996 until earlier this year when long overdue pay equity adjustments were finally implemented.

Heli Kanaan, an LPN at Vancouver's Finnish-Canadian Care Home, told a Vancouver newspaper, "You don't go into this job for the money — but it's nice to be recognized for the job you do."

The award fulfilled one element of the pay equity language that's been part of HEU's facilities collective agreements since 1992. The language calls for a comparison of the wages and benefits of HEU members as compared to those of workers in the direct public service.

Independent arbitrator Stephen Kelleher determined the cost of achieving this element of pay equity was \$25.8 million in 1996 plus improvements to maternity and parental leave.

Many health care workers are still

years away from meeting their pay equity targets. "This province needs comprehensive pay equity legislation so that gender-based wage discrimination can be addressed right across the public sector in a systematic way," says Allnutt.

"But in the absence of such legislation, we'll continue to fight to close the wage gap at the bargaining table."

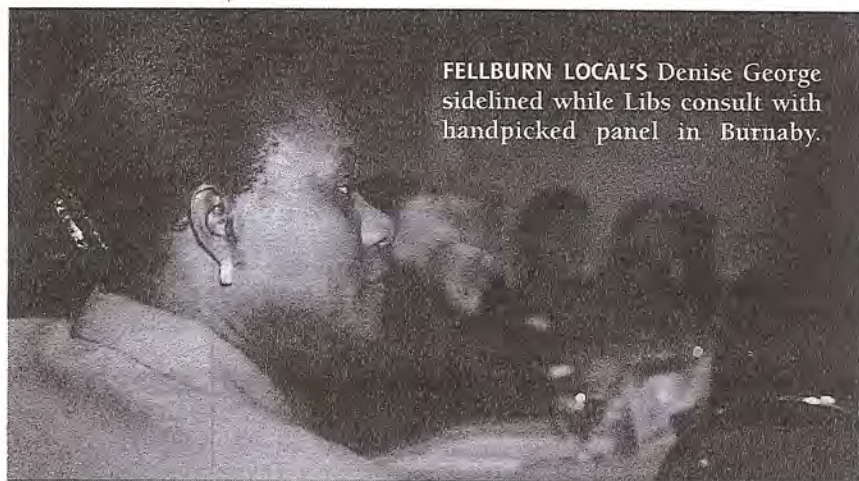
But even now there are some employers who are refusing to deliver.

They've unilaterally denied significant pay equity adjustments and improved maternity and parental leave benefits to more than 1,000 HEU members who work at 27 health care facilities formerly covered by independent agreements.

That's angered HEU activist and expectant mom Michelle Kelly, a care aide at Mission's Pleasantview Care Home. "We're all doing the same work and are covered by the same agreement," she says.

To fight back, Kelly's local organized a high profile public information session on Sept. 8 that resulted in hundreds of signatures on a petition.

HEU will try to resolve the matter in front of Kelleher on Nov. 27. "If we're not satisfied with the outcome of the hearing," says Allnutt, "then resolving this injustice will be front and centre in the upcoming round of collective bargaining."



FELLBURN LOCAL'S Denise George sidelined while Libs consult with handpicked panel in Burnaby.

Liberals shut us out

B.C. Liberal leader Gordon Campbell has probably met more HEU members this fall than ever before.

That's because the opposition leader embarked on a province-wide tour billed as a "dialogue on health care."

But HEU members who've turned up at Campbell's whistle stops are having a hard time getting heard.

And with few exceptions, HEU members aren't on the guest list as round table participants. As observers, they can't participate or ask Campbell about his views on critical health care issues.

Eleanor Schmidt, the chairperson of HEU's Nelson local, went to the round table in her community to tell Campbell about her facility's costly experi-

ment in privatized food services.

But Schmidt was frustrated to find that representatives of other health care unions plus a selection of civic politicians and physicians had seats at the table and a voice in the discussion while she did not.

"HEU has many constructive suggestions for improving the delivery of public health care in a more cost effective manner," Schmidt told Campbell in a letter.

With the tour half complete at press time, HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt says, "If the Liberal leader is serious about this consultation, he'll listen to our members' suggestions for modernizing health care."

HEU activists leading fight for elder care

As the union eagerly awaits an announcement of increased funding for long-term care and home support, HEU activists have been battling privatization attempts at extended care facilities in Burnaby and Victoria.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt says government has

pledged to increase community and continuing care funding and bolster vital home support services.

"Improved services for seniors and the disabled is a crucial element of HEU's plan to modernize Medicare," says Allnutt. "So it's imperative that Victoria increase funding in this sector on par with the \$180 million dollar boost to health authorities Sept. 19 for expanded acute care services."

And Allnutt urged government to formally announce already approved

capital funds to build 2,000 new long-term care beds and upwards of 500 assisted living spaces to address urgent wait list demands. Allnutt expects that the majority of the new beds will be public or not-for-profit.

HEU members are fighting plans by the Simon Fraser Health Region to close the

205-bed Cascade Residence extended care complex and replace it through a public/private partnership (P3). SFHR's fall plans for a new facility may decrease the number of extended care

beds in the region by 100.

In the Capital Health Region HEU activists have mounted a campaign against the use of P3s to replace the mould-ridden Gorge Road Hospital. "Data shows that for-profit long-term care is overwhelmingly poorer in quality and in the long run more expensive than not-for-profit care," says Allnutt.

In November, HEU, in conjunction with the BCGEU, BCNU and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives will release groundbreaking research uncovering Medicare's weakest link — problems with the public/private mix in community care.

'It's imperative that Victoria increase funding'

PRESIDENT'S DESK



Future full of challenges for all

by Fred Muzin

OVER THE COURSE of 11 days this October, HEU Convention and Wage Policy delegates' primary responsibility is to ensure that our union becomes even stronger so that we can successfully defend public Medicare and negotiate fair collective agreements for all of our members. By reviewing and challenging our democratic structures, we ensure that leadership at all levels is accountable and in sync with members' aspirations. Our activists, re-energized and armed with a clear definition of our bargaining priorities, must return to their locals prepared to mobilize for success.

In the near future there will be both federal and provincial elections. The recent growth in transfer payments to the provinces for health care, which only increases the national share of expenditures to 15 per cent rather than the original 50 per cent, remains insufficient to repair the damage created by a decade of cut-backs. Health care workers have paid a heavy personal price to maintain quality services despite record numbers of injuries, tremendous stress levels and workload overload. It is imperative that the new money be targeted to improve patient care,

'Health care means people caring for people'

rather than becoming buried in global budgets, and that we work closely with our provincial government to modernize Medicare. Medicare is being besieged by those who value private profit over caregiving. We must absolutely reject the myth that privatization offers any meaningful alternative for society.

Many studies, in Manitoba, Alberta and the United States confirm that publicly provided services are more cost effective and provide better overall care. A system that caters to the privileged few results in winners and losers and ignores the fact that a healthy, well educated population is Canada's greatest economic resource.

Medicare is complex. Without a broad range of expertise – with practical nurses, registered nurses, care aides and doctors on the front lines and technologists, housekeeping, laundry and nutrition staff, tradespeople, clerical and information systems workers, maintenance and stores employees behind the scenes – there would be an inability for anyone to provide top notch services. The recent rural physicians' dispute in B.C. is regrettable, given that it ignores the fact that although doctors are an essential part of the system, they alone are not 'the' system.

The struggles for Medicare and for justice and dignity for members are inseparable. Health care means people caring for people. Injured people, unable to work, can't provide assistance. Burnt out and overstressed caregivers do not cope effectively with increased patient acuity. These fights can only be won by working with a broad based coalition of other unions and our social partners. We all understand that poverty, homelessness and a lack of education result in poor health outcomes.

Convention delegates will provide guidance on how best to utilize HEU's resources to support and nurture local leaders to win. We must review the evolving function and structure of the Provincial Executive with a view to improving communications, increasing networking and helping to motivate members. Strong leadership at all levels, membership commitment and involvement and clear direction will allow HEU to continue to be a force for progressive change.



RAY MELVILLE shows off some of the artifacts that he and others have saved from the refuse bin at Royal Columbian Hospital.

He plumbs the hospital for antiques

by Dale Fuller

When Ray Melville started working as a plumber at Royal Columbian Hospital in 1986, he was already an inveterate antique collector. "I've been collecting antiques since the 1960s," says Melville.

And when he had been at the facility for awhile, he couldn't help but begin to see a treasure trove in what people were throwing away at the facility.

He started stashing away things he found discarded, storing them in odd places in the hospital's maintenance building where he works.

Old plumbing fixtures were what originally caught his eye. "I thought it would be a shame to just toss them," he says.

As a plumber, Melville visits every part of the facility. "Anywhere there is water, there go the plumbers," he says. So, soon his interest expanded. And as he is not a shy person, he began talking to his co-workers in the hospital about what he was doing. He also began noticing that there were interesting items in other departments that were being discarded.

He asked others to send things his way instead of into the refuse bin. Or people heard about what he was doing and did it on their own. Soon he had a collection not only of old plumbing fixtures but lights, signs, lots of old photographs. And other interesting objects. Like some old golf trophies that someone found in the back of a closet.

There used to be an annual golf tournament between Royal Columbian and Vancouver General. The last one was in 1958, and we won it, so we still have the trophy."

There is one EXIT sign from the 1950s or 1940s which looks like a piece of art, reflecting the style of industrial design of the era. Another sign was salvaged from in back of a bank vault,

when the credit union site at RCH was replaced with a bank machine. The hand-painted sign says Royal Columbian and Lumber Inspectors' Credit Union. "Which later became Westminster Savings," he says.

Melville gets a lot of help from fellow plumber Mike Adams. Together they've mounted a lot of photos into albums which often go on display when one of their co-workers retires.

He'd like to have a small museum at the facility someday, and feels the hospital and the health region is supportive of his idea.

He especially wants to have a sterilizer in working order that visiting school children can operate. "So they can see how things used to be done – in the old days."



NOTEBOOK

"Toilet cleaners" or valued employees?

by Stephen Howard

As HEU activists get set for the union's 22nd convention, there have been some critical political developments that give sharp focus to the positions the NDP and B.C. Liberals will take into the next election around Medicare, and the role of health care workers.

They also help HEU members zero in on the choices they have when an election gets called within the next six months. Are we just overpaid "toilet cleaners" as one Liberal MLA quipped, or, in Premier Dosanjh's view, "valued employees" who face tremendous workplace pressures, worth "every cent" you're paid?

He's ahead in the polls, but in an early October Kamloops event, opposition leader Gordon Campbell walked into a hailstorm thanks to local Liberal MLA Kevin Krueger. Krueger, or "potty-mouth" as he was labeled by a media wag, called HEU members "toilet cleaners" in a televised steel-toed boot attack on HEU's pay-equity settlement.

Pressed by a large contingent of angry HEU members at the event, the Liberals zoomed into damage control mode. Krueger and Campbell apologized. And despite months of Liberal attacks on pay equity, the opposition leader said his party has "strongly supported



'Gordon Campbell walked into a hailstorm thanks to local Liberal MLA Kevin Krueger'

the principal of pay equity and will continue to do so."

Then Campbell conjured up privatization ghosts from the past when he ran into HEU activist Doris Gripich at another Liberal event in Dawson Creek. Gripich reminded Campbell of his 1996 pledge to rip-up the employment security agreement in health care. What was Campbell going to do this time round?, she wondered. His response? He'd still rip it up if he was elected in 2001.

Meanwhile, a relaxed Ujjal Dosanjh sat down with the *Guardian* for an interview (see page 12) that set a different tone. Whether they're answering phones or providing bedside care, the Premier knows health care workers face tremendous pressures on the job. He also offered some of the strongest government commitments ever on issues like utilizing Licensed Practical Nurses and Care Aides to tackle the nursing shortage.

While the Liberal leader is at best fuzzy about privatization, Dosanjh is passionate. "For me, there is no room for private health care in B.C." And when it comes to valuing the efforts of health care workers, Dosanjh says he and Campbell are miles apart. While Campbell has openly criticized HEU's collective agreement, the Premier believes "health care workers deserve every penny they get caring for British Columbians."

Like 1996, HEU members can play a critical role in the outcome of the next provincial election. Over the coming months we'll let party leaders and MLAs speak for themselves. And in our December issue, Gordon Campbell outlines his views in another feature interview.



Our future, our health care

Fair, innovative
and public is the
approach we are
taking into our
bargaining

BY MIKE OLD

It's hard to imagine a more challenging time to begin bargaining. With a provincial election widely expected in the spring of 2001, bargaining will take place against a backdrop of political uncertainty. The economy is on the mend, but the NDP's new fiscal program could put resources for a settlement in short supply.

Then there are the high profile wage demands by nurses and doctors and a campaign by big business to restrain wages and privatize services. HEU members will need to be more committed than ever to making progress on collective bargaining issues.

And progress is needed on several fronts according to HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt – the union's chief bargaining spokesperson.

"Despite the gains made over the last 10 years – gains that HEU members are justifiably proud of – there are fundamental inequities that still exist between workers in health care in terms of wages, benefits and working conditions," says Allnutt.

Strengthen employment security and training
Just how serious would the shortage of skilled health care workers be today without the employment security agreement negotiated by health care unions in the early '90s?

Along with retraining, job sharing and early retirement programs, B.C.'s groundbreaking employment security agreement has preserved the skills and experience of health care workers at a time when thou-

HEU members will be seeking better wages and working conditions and better quality health care for British Columbians.

sands lost their jobs in Ontario and Alberta.

But with an aging workforce in health care, training is a critical element of a broad recruitment, retention and retraining strategy in health care – a strategy that fosters a culture of training and upgrading.

It's time to focus on "upside adjustment" by addressing labour shortages and opportunities from within the existing workforce.

And the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency must have the funding needed to train HEU members to take advantage of contracting-in opportunities and areas of growing need.

Safe work and safe workloads "No worker deserves to be injured and health care workers suffer most of all," says Allnutt. "And it's Care Aides and LPNs who are most at risk."

A new collective agreement must target workload and other OH&S factors that make these members of the nursing team and other health care workers so vulnerable to injuries.

For 77 per cent of HEU members, workload is in-

creasing – and they say dealing with workload issues is the single most important factor in improving working conditions and job satisfaction.

Almost half our members have worked with ongoing chronic pain over a six-month period while 48 per cent report being injured on the job over the past five years.

The new Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare must be given the resources and support to continue to advance the best practices needed to reduce the human and economic costs of health care workplace injuries.

Allnutt believes that innovative approaches to eliminate the source of most health care injuries include a "no manual lifting" policy and new initiatives to reduce workload.

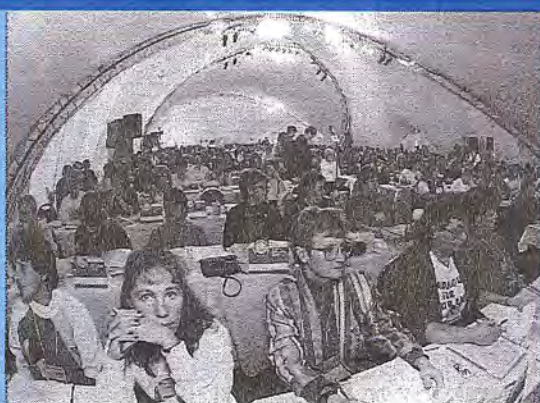
"Our health care system can't afford the higher WCB assessment rates, staff shortages, increased workload and human misery that result from high injury rates in health care," says Allnutt.

please turn to page 8



DEBRA ROONEY ILLUSTRATION

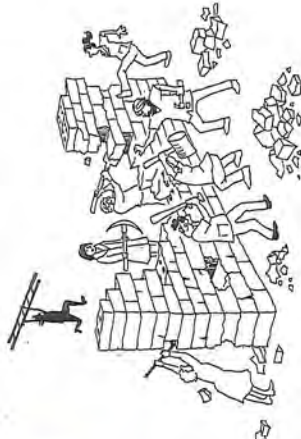
Five hundred delegates gathered in the giant tent in Richmond in October 1998 to set the union's course for the next two years at HEU's 21st Biennial Convention.



When HEU and its companion unions last set out a strategy for bargaining in 1998, the goal was to win better conditions for caregivers, improve the quality of health care services we deliver and win parity for the community. HEU's 22nd Biennial Convention is set to take place from Oct. 15 to 20. Wage Policy is hot on its heels from Oct. 23 to 25. There will be a new Provincial Executive and bargaining committee to plan the union's strategy for the upcoming round of negotiations.



While the number of injuries in health care have risen by 12 per cent, the costs have skyrocketed by 57 per cent, indicating an increase in the severity of injuries and the duration of claims.



1989 2000

APRIL 1, 1998

APRIL 1, 2000

1995

1999

our future, our health care

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But despite these modest wage gains, HEU wage levels have been targeted by big business and their allies who argue that lower wages will free up more resources for direct patient care.

These attacks, combined with high profile wage demands of RNs and physicians mean HEU members will have to fight hard for fair wage increases. The B.C. government needs a comprehensive framework to deal with health care wages – one that includes salaried physicians. A fair compensation policy will provide health care workers with the competitive salaries needed to recruit and retain the most skilled and experienced.

"It's time to see some real growth in wage levels as the economy improves," says Allnutt.

Equity for all facilities sub-sector workers In the 90s, HEU members bargained an end to wage and benefit discrimination existing between hospitals and long-term care. But even though HEU members have achieved a common bargaining unit, the "levelling" process has been stalled by health care employers.

And they've refused to deliver comparability to all members who are entitled to redress.

"Every member of the facilities sector deserves access to a common wage schedule and benefits," says Allnutt. "It's time to close the gap for those workers that have so far been sidelined by health employer mismanagement."

"And every publicly-funded long-term care facility in every community must be able to attract skilled health care workers on an equal footing."

Taking down the wall The expiry of the community health agreement next March is an opportunity to end wage and benefit discrimination in community health.

B.C.'s right-wing coalition will make its presence felt at bargaining table

When HEU heads to the bargaining table later this year, they'll be taking on more than just health employers.

For more than two years, big business has been campaigning hard for government policies that would make it easier to contract-out or privatize a variety of public services including those delivered by health care workers.

"B.C.'s \$8.5 billion public health care system represents immense untapped profit potential for big business," according to HEU's chief negotiator Chris Allnutt. "One of the biggest road-



Women and Children's delegate Ellen Chan takes the microphone at the 1997 Wage Policy Conference.

wages and working conditions are in place. A single bargaining unit for general and support workers will facilitate a more effective, integrated model of care.

The good news is that there's broad agreement among the affected health care unions to pursue a single bargaining unit and collective agreement for all general and support workers – just as is the case for RNs and paramedical professionals.

Pension justice for all Some workers have spent decades providing publicly-funded health care services without having access to the pension plan that covers most HEU members. There's no pension plan available to most community health workers. The same holds true for many health care workers at cer-

delivering health care. So they're targeted wages.

Along with big business and certain media, the Liberals are hinting that HEU wages are "crowding out" wages for registered nurses.

And the Fraser Institute argues that if HEU members delivering so-called "hotel" services – housekeeping, laundry and food services – are paid at hospitality industry rates, the health care system would save \$280 million a year.

That's \$4,500 squeezed out of the wages of every HEU member.

"Forcing thousands of women into low-paid, privatized jobs will do nothing to strengthen health care services,"

First Nations are a priority

Negotiating contracts with First Nations band councils has a lot in common with bargaining with other health employers, but there are substantial differences as well.

When there are snags in the negotiating process or when a collective agreement just isn't implemented, the problems are resolved by the federal – not provincial – labour board. But when the employer is a band council, claims that they cannot afford the wage and benefit demands are not unfamiliar to union negotiators. At a recent First Nations

Summit meeting a Skidegate Band Council member complained HEU was seeking wage parity with workers at large urban health care facilities.

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HEU Royal City Manor members working at the private for-profit long-term care facility in New Westminster, have voted 93 per cent in favour of a new contract that raises hourly wage rates and improves benefits.

"This agreement sends a clear message to other private long-term care employers that the time has come to properly recognize the valuable role that caregivers have in providing care and services to seniors," said HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt.

"It establishes a good precedent for private facilities in Canada."

Technically/professional members key to change Rapidly changing technologies and innovations in treatment means that our health care system depends on our technical and professional members more than ever.

And with looming shortages in certain occupational areas in health care, professional and technical members should be able to work to the full extent of their competencies.

That's why it's important to build on the education leave and professional development opportunities won in previous agreements. And expanding the scope of practice for these members means reviewing their benchmarks and providing appropriate educational leave and educational opportunities.

Progress in these areas would represent a clear win for public health care.

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But the fight is far from over. The pay equity gap for some classifications ranges up to 13 per cent – even after comparability. "With the opposition Liberals targeting our pay equity wins in the B.C. legislation," says Allnutt, "we'll need to stand ready to defend our pay equity principles."

Fighting privatization and contracting out Big business has carried out a high profile public campaign for gutted labour laws, tax cuts, slashed social programs and wholesale privatization and contracting-out of public services including health care.

But HEU members' experience shows that contracting-out results in service cuts and reduced quality as corporations pad their profit margins. High staff turnover, hidden costs, the loss of skilled workers in the public system and a lack of accountability compound the long-term costs of contracting-out.

"Contracted-out and privatized health services will depress wages and throw women workers back into the job ghetto that we've fought so hard to eliminate," says Allnutt.

"Let's move forward by building on our collective agreement language around contracting-in and provide our members with the tools to provide cost-effective, accountable and regionally integrated support services in our public health care system."

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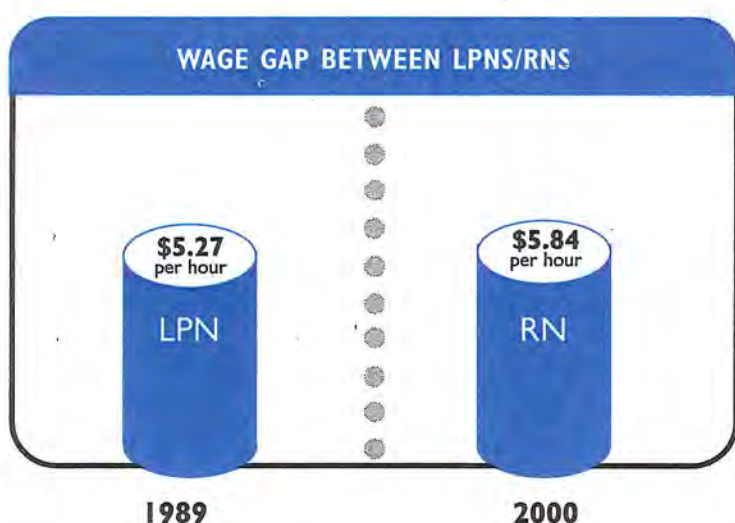
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And there's still more that can be done to strengthen Medicare through stronger contracting-in language, improved training and education provisions and other measures that help recruit and retain experienced and skilled health care workers.

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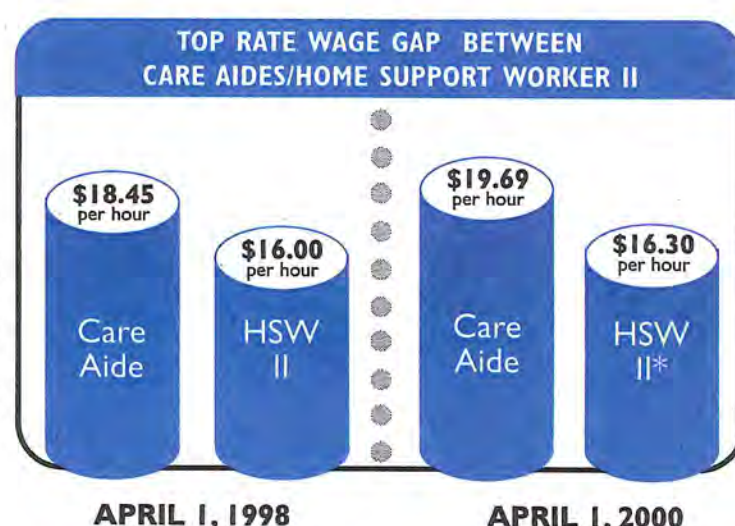
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HEU is determined that the wall between the community and facilities will tumble in this round of bargaining.



The difference in top rate wages between RNs and LPNs is widening

*The Home Support Worker II rate awaits a total of five per cent classification adjustments that were achieved for 1999 and 2000



our future, our h

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These attacks, combined with high profile wage demands of RNs and physicians mean HEU members will have to fight hard for fair wage increases. The B.C. government needs a comprehensive framework to deal with health care wages – one that includes salaried physicians. A fair compensation policy will provide health care workers with the competitive salaries needed to recruit and retain the most skilled and experienced. "It's time to see some real growth in wage levels as the economy improves," says Allnutt.

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Taking down the wall The expiry of the community health agreement next March is an opportunity to end wage and benefit discrimination in community health.



Women and Children's delegate Ellen Chan takes the microphone at the 1997 Wage Policy Conference.

In the last round, the bargaining association failed to get a commitment from health employers and government to wage parity and adequate pensions.

"It's left a sizable wage gap that's got nothing to do with the work done and everything to do with what side of the community/facilities line our members fall on," says Allnutt. "Why does a Home Support Worker II in the community earn a top rate of \$16.30 while a Care Aide earns \$19.69?"

Integrating health care delivery regionally and across a continuum of care won't work if varying

wages and working conditions are in place. A single bargaining unit for general and support workers will facilitate a more effective, integrated model of care.

The good news is that there's broad agreement among the affected health care unions to pursue a single bargaining unit and collective agreement for all general and support workers – just as is the case for RNs and paramedical professionals.

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"B.C.'s \$8.5 billion public health care system represents immense untapped profit potential for big business," according to HEU's chief negotiator Chris Allnutt. "One of the biggest road-

blocks that stands between these corporations and huge profits is the employment security agreement that HEU and other health care unions bargained in 1993."

And these corporations have the ear of B.C. Liberal leader Gordon Campbell who's promised to tear up the employment security agreement, which he refers to as 'sweetheart deal'.

But to gut employment security, big business and their allies need a better excuse than the unpopular notion of a greater role for the private sector in

delivering health care. So they've targeted wages.

Along with big business and certain media, the Liberals are hinting that HEU wages are "crowding out" wages for registered nurses.

And the Fraser Institute argues that if HEU members delivering so-called "hotel" services – housekeeping, laundry and food services – are paid at hospitality industry rates, the health care system would save \$200 million a year.

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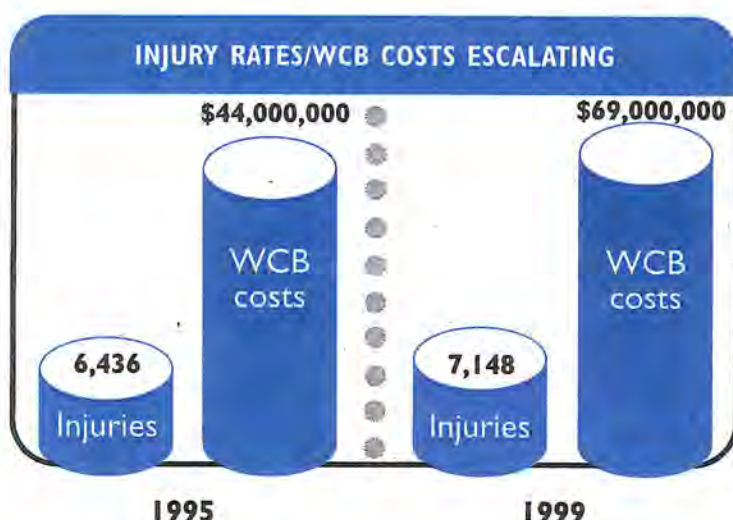
"Forcing thousands of women into low-paid, privatized jobs will do nothing to strengthen health care services,"

says Allnutt. "In fact, it will have exactly the opposite effect by reducing accountability, increasing staff turnover and undermining the regional co-ordination of services."

"I believe that the public understands that health care services are not hotel services," adds Allnutt. "And that maintaining sterile, virus-free health care facilities is critical to the health of patients."

Allnutt says that Campbell and the business community should take another look at the employment security agreement which has preserved the skills and experience of thousands of health care workers during a period of massive restructuring in health care.

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vate workplaces and it's one that we intend to build upon throughout B.C.'s private long-term care system."

Across-the-board increases will total \$1.65 per hour (an average of 10.1 per cent) over the two-year life of the agreement, which runs from Jan. 1, 2000 to Dec. 31, 2001.

Benefit improvements include better sick leave, extended health and long-term disability provisions, increased vacation time, and for the first time, modest shift premiums and an RRSP plan.

Royal City Manor is owned by CPL REIT, the largest, private for-profit owner/operator of seniors' long-term care facilities in Canada.



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Trades/maintenance – investing in our facilities Too often health care employers exploit HEU members by failing to use appropriately trained and qualified trades workers or providing appropriate compensation for expanded job duties.

At the same time, apprenticeship and training opportunities for maintenance workers are in short supply.

By providing the appropriately trained trades and maintenance staff, health care facilities and regional health authorities can expand the range of services provided in-house while avoiding costly and less efficient outside contracts for services and maintenance.

The public has a huge investment in health care facilities," says Allnutt.

"We need collective agreement language that ensures that appropriately trained and ticketed workers are looking after our investment."

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International outcry falls on deaf U.S. ears

by André Bueno

The United States is viewed by thousands around the globe as the pillar of democracy and the land of freedom. Many of us think that means Americans are entitled to voice their concerns in a democratic way. Unfortunately, if Americans oppose their government's policies at home or abroad, they are prosecuted and persecuted. They have their constitutional rights infringed upon and violated.

There are currently over 500 political prisoners in the U.S. Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier are two of them.

Abu-Jamal, an African-American journalist, has spent the last 18 years on death row for a crime he did not commit. He has written from his death row cell on social and economic injustice for workers and the oppressed.

This is just a continuation of the journalistic microscope he turned on police brutality, racist abuses by the authorities and corrupt public officials before he was charged with murder and jailed.

Unless the movement to free Abu-Jamal is successful, this eloquent "voice of the voiceless" will be silenced. And that is despite the fact that there is a mountain of evidence that he is innocent.

His trial was a miscarriage of justice where key witnesses were coerced and intimidated. His trial judge is infamous for sending



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Hispanic and African-American defendants to death row.

Peltier is a First Nations American who stood up against oppression by fighting for Aboriginal rights. He was arrested in Alberta for the murder of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Reserve in the U.S. during a shoot-out between the agents and residents of the reserve. The U.S. was successful in having him extradited based on eye-witness evidence, which the American government knew had been coerced from the witness.

Even though the whole case against Peltier rested on that eye-witness account, and even though he has served 24 years of his two life sentences, the American "justice system" will not grant him his freedom. During his parole hearing, there were tens of thousands of letters in support of Leonard Peltier. Still, he was denied his liberty.

Amnesty International considers him to be a political prisoner who has exhausted all legal methods available to win his freedom. "Amnesty International recognizes that a retrial is no longer a feasible option and believes that Leonard Peltier should be immediately and unconditionally released," says the organization.

These two men have become symbols of repression. Dignitaries from all over the world – men like Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu – have demanded their freedom. But so far the powers that be have not listened.

That is no reason to stop trying. You can access two websites to find out more about Peltier and Abu-Jamal: www.freepeltier.org and www.freemumia.org.

• André Bueno is a social activist and Victoria General local member.



LUNCHTIME AT THE Café Columbian and Hetty Olszewski serves the tasty fare to HEU members Pat Spaan, Stan Rosen and Ray Melville. Catering to visitors, employees, patients, physicians and volunteers, the cafe has been a big success. The cafe is wholly owned and operated by Royal Columbian Hospital.

Toolkit shows how it's done

HEU members who want to bring contracted-out services back into their facility will soon be able to refer to the union's new *Contracting-In Toolkit*. The kit will show union members how, step-by-step, they can make a good economic case to their administrators to provide certain services in-house.

It contains practical advice and success stories to inspire, like the coffee kiosk and deli at Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster.

In 1995 RCH contracted out a coffee and food kiosk to a multinational cor-

poration. But a new director of food and nutrition services for the Simon Fraser Regional Health Board initiated a review of the contract in 1997, and a Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency study recommended in-house operation of specialty coffee bars at RCH.

In June 1999, the hospital terminated the contract and revamped the hospital coffee shop as the Café Columbian. This was the result of several years of organizing by HEU members, the forward-looking approach of some managers and support from HLAA.

We've got solutions

Use of LPNs, Care Aides can solve part of nursing shortage, HEU tells health minister

IN A SEPT. 22 meeting with health minister Mike Farnworth, HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt urged government to adopt team-based solutions and utilize the skills and potentials of Licensed Practical Nurses and Care Aides as one way to solve B.C.'s nursing shortage.

"Clearly, government needs to harness all the opportunities provided by the wide-range of nursing staff already working in our health care system," says Allnutt. "That means solutions involving RNs, LPNs, psychiatric nurses, Care Aides and home support workers."

HEU received positive feedback from Farnworth and other government officials for the union's proposals. These, Allnutt says, build on the successful joint efforts between employers, government and unions over the past 15 months in putting to work a special \$10 million LPN and Care Aide nursing fund to provide concrete solutions to the nursing shortage.

The momentum for enhanced roles for Care Aides and LPNs will get a boost from a just-completed research project that is expected to support broad nursing team solutions.

As part of the 1998 facilities contract

HEU and BCGEU worked with the Health Employers' Association to examine current and future roles of LPNs and Care Aides in acute and continuing care facilities with \$200,000 in funding provided by the NDP government.

'B.C. has the lowest LPN to RN ratio in Canada'

The joint committee looked at current utilization based on six case studies which describe staffing mixes and roles, and examine challenges and successes faced in the change process. And it reviewed related education, regulation and practice in other provinces.

The research confirmed B.C. has the lowest LPN to RN ratio in Canada, and that LPNs here are frequently not used to the full scope of their competencies. Other factors in the low utilization are jurisdictional conflict with RNs and the inability to recruit qualified LPNs.

Meanwhile, Allnutt says BCNU has agreed to join HEU in a process coordinated by the B.C. Federation of Labour to discuss mutual concerns about the roles of LPNs and RNs. Fed president Jim Sinclair proposed the idea at a Sept. 27 meeting between the parties.

At that meeting, HEU raised concerns with BCNU's wage comparisons between RNs, LPNs and Care Aides that featured prominently in a recent news story.

Vote readied on key pension plan changes

HEU members will soon be voting to ratify important Municipal Pension Plan changes that will give workers more control over key issues like increased pension payments, if a resolution for a province-wide ballot is approved at the union's Oct. 15 to 20 convention.

The Provincial Executive supports

the changes that provide for joint union/employer governance of the plan, which opens the door for further changes like increased payouts for retirees in the future. If the convention motion is approved, HEU staff will work with local leaders to develop a schedule of community-based votes in October and November.

The union will also send a direct mail letter and other information to members outlining the changes. In addition, background materials produced by the Municipal Pension Plan are being distributed in workplaces across B.C.

It's proposed that workers and employers run the plan jointly, and HEU would be represented. Surpluses,

which occur when contributions and investment exceed benefit payouts, would be shared. While our pension plan is well run and currently in surplus, liabilities would also be shared. And part of the agreement for change contains provisions to establish "cushions" that will reduce the likelihood of liabilities occurring.

Labour

NOTEWORTHY NEWS ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE HERE AND ABROAD



MARIAM SOBRINO/BCFL PHOTO

ON THE LINE More than 400 trade unionists, family and friends turned out for an August 22 rally in support of the striking workers and their families at Superior Poultry in Coquitlam. They've been on strike since July 23.

Labour faces big challenge with CAW/SEIU

The Canadian Labour Congress is facing its biggest challenge in decades as it imposed sanctions against its largest private sector affiliate this past summer.

The Canadian Auto Workers was found to be in violation of the CLC constitution after a raiding charge was filed by the Service Employees' International Union in February.

SEIU claimed that CAW raided eight of its Ontario health care locals. CAW responded that the members of those locals voted overwhelmingly to leave their union.

By mid-September almost 90 SEIU certifications in Ontario – mostly in health care – had been switched to CAW as a result of labour board sanctioned votes.

Under CLC rules, CAW reps have been barred from participation on the executives of the CLC, provincial federations of labour and local labour councils and from CLC conventions, committees and education functions.

CUPE's national president Judy Darcy still believes that a resolution to the dispute can be found.

In an open letter to CAW president Buzz Hargrove, Darcy stresses the "strong history of collaboration and solidarity in defence of workers and their rights" between the CAW and CUPE and repeats CUPE's position that a negotiated resolution to the dispute between the CAW and the CLC is the best solution.

The letter was prompted by statements made by Hargrove about CUPE's role in the dispute.

You can read Darcy's letter at <www.cupe.ca>. A history of the dispute including links to the CAW and SEIU web sites can be found at <www.clc-ctc.ca>.

Poultry workers cry fowl

Heavy-handed tactics won't break poultry plant pickets, says union

GOON SQUADS, picket line harassment and a charmed chicken named Union Bruce – these are some of the elements of a dramatic battle for basic union rights being fought by more than 220 poultry workers in Coquitlam.

They've been on the picket line since July 23 fighting for a first contract that addresses deplorable working conditions and low wages. According to the workers' union, Superior Poultry has retaliated by hiring a goon squad that's harassing picketers and their supporters.

The employer has already been fined for a series of Labour Code violations and the Labour Relations Board has ordered the company to cease and desist its harassment, intimidation, and abuse of employees. The United Food

and Commercial Workers Local 1518 has filed for an injunction against Superior Poultry for inciting picket line violence.

Superior hires almost exclusively from a pool of new immigrants to Canada making the tactics – including video surveillance – even more outrageous.

"Our union is proud to represent and support these members," says UFCW Local 1518 president Brooke Sundin. "They deserve to be treated with justice and dignity, just as all Canadians do, and we're going to do everything we can for them. Their struggle for a better life shouldn't mean they have to put up with conditions that were long ago overcome in most workplaces."

And things are looking up for the workers. Under pressure from cam-

paigners, retail giant Costco – who had been the main customer for strike-bound Superior – will no longer stock its product. And the B.C. Federation of Labour says it will help escalate the consumer boycott if required.

In the meantime, the workers' spirits are being buoyed by widespread support from other unions who held a massive rally at the plant Aug. 22.

And let's not forget Union Bruce, a chicken who escaped the killing floor and joined the strikers on the picket line as their mascot.

Superior Poultry manager Bruce Arabsky – Union Bruce's namesake – made the outlandish suggestion to the *National Post* that the union had planted the chicken to somehow make the company look bad.

'Things are looking up for the workers'

Burmese military crackdown

The exiled leader of Burma's trade union central is calling for a strong international response to a new round of repression in his country.

Maung Maung of the Federation of Trade Unions-Burma says the military has ransacked the headquarters of the main opposition party, which he fears will soon be disbanded.

In 1988, the military staged a bloody coup. Opposition party leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, overwhelmingly won a subsequent election in 1990, but she's been under virtual house arrest ever since.

While her international profile keeps her relatively safe from physical harm, others are vulnerable to military reprisals. Those who try to form trade unions disappear, are tortured or killed.

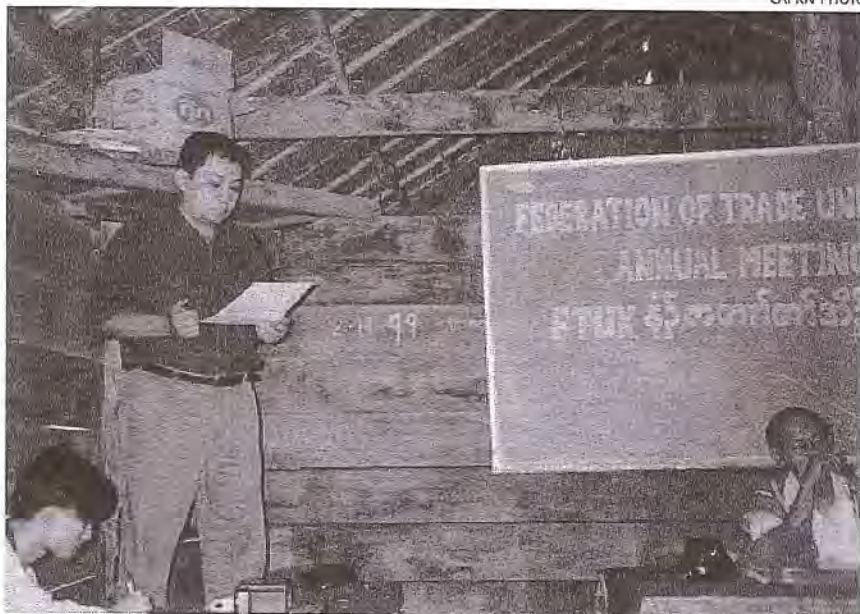
Amnesty International reports there are 12,000 political prisoners in Burma.

Forced labour under inhumane conditions resulted in a call by the International Labour Organization for sanctions against Burma.

"We call for immediate action from our trade union brothers and sisters around the world to denounce the regime and bring democracy back to Burma," says Maung.

"We believe that with a democratic government in power, we will finally be able to return to our homes, legally organize unions, end all use of forced labour and ensure that the human rights of the people of Burma are respected."

What can you do to help? You can find out at <www.caprn.bc.ca>.



CAPRN PHOTO

FTUB general secretary Maung Maung addressing migrant workers on the Thai-Burma border.

CAN UJJAL TURN IT AROUND?

Put yourself in the shoes of a front-line HEU member. What are the pressures they face in terms of keeping B.C.'s health care system going during tough times?

I know from talking to people who work in hospitals that they have increasingly more demands on their time, their energy. They end up coming home absolutely tired, ready to crash. And I think that tells you the kind of pressure they face. Whether it's someone who's answering the phone or whether it's someone looking after patients. I know that's tough.

Having talked to a very close friend who's been working lifting patients I know that there are a large number of injuries that happen and the work situation is not safe to extent that it ought to be.

What's the government's plan for reducing the injury rate in health care?

First we need to make sure we continue to fund health care so there are sufficient number of workers and there isn't increasing pressure on a smaller workforce to do more work.

That's the first thing, and we've been continuing to do that. We've just provided funding to health care authorities across the province which includes \$10 million for OHGS equipment. I know injuries happen in terms of lifting patients, having to move patients physically using your own energy. We require equipment and resources that assist health care workers in doing their jobs without having to face injuries. And those are two things that the government wants to do.

You're the most popular political leader in the province. What's the re-election strategy you'll pursue?

I think people are looking for hope. It's quite clear from the polls that Mr. Campbell doesn't provide hope even for the people who support him and his party. He simply provides a place where people can go and vote, because they are unhappy with us. I think we have to give people a positive reason to support us. We must reconnect with the values of today's families.

Whether it's health care, education, services for children and families, we need to make sure we focus on the needs of families. Not on the needs of the few and the more powerful that might be represented by Mr. Campbell.

At the end of the day, people are looking for hope, and I believe that our party has the issues around social and economic justice. Mr. Campbell has no new ideas. He just wants to slash and burn both taxes and fees.

You just made a series of announcements on increased funding. How do these announcements fit in the NDP's action plan for health care?

We want to make sure we provide the resources so that public health care is strengthened in British Columbia. First, we believe in strong publicly funded health care based on the principles of the Canada Health Act.

Secondly, we will fight against privatization. We have provided additional funding of \$180 million to regional health authorities plus \$70 million for equipment. We've attempted to settle the issues with the doctors. We want to make sure our system is strong and responsive to the needs of British Columbians so that there is no need for a Brian Day private clinic. I want to make sure that we have strengthened and resourced our public health care to the extent where we can outlaw clinics like Day's. We don't need them anymore. That's where I want to go.

In terms of increased funding, you've dealt with the acute care side. But what about some of the other vital sectors of health like continuing care and home support?

As you know we are looking at providing additional resources for long term care and home support. You can look forward to a few announcements in the coming weeks.

Both you and health minister Mike Farnworth played a positive role in the national debate around getting the feds to ante up more money. What do you think the infusion of the new money is going to mean?

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With less than seven months

before he has to go to the polls, Premier Ujjal Dosanjh faces a big challenge to rebuild NDP support and narrow the gap with the Liberals.

With protecting and modernizing Medicare being such an important issue for HEU members and the public, **Guardian** editor **STEPHEN HOWARD** interviewed Dosanjh in early October to find out where health care fits in the Premier's re-election plans.

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Now we know not much federal money flows this year, but the significant amount of money starts flowing next year. And that will strengthen our ability to make continuing improvement in the public health care system.

I'm hoping the federal government can move to a much broader focus on the issue of privatization. But they haven't. Not many others want to engage in that fight across the country, but I do. I think it's an important fight. It's a fight for the future of British Columbia and the future of Canada in terms of our ability to provide the best health care in the world.

At the First Ministers' meetings you rubbed shoulders with the Kleins and the Harrisses and the Tobins over the past several months. How would you compare the health care challenges that we face with those of other provinces?

What I learned from talking to the premiers is they face similar problems. I think our system is, relatively speaking, better than the rest of the country. Except that you don't hear their horror stories and we only know about our own difficult stories that we watch on television or see on the front pages. But you should take pride in the fact that just the other day there was a report that said we dealt with cancer in the best manner possible in the country. And that comes from the sustained effort to do the best we can in health care generally.

Back onto the issue of the threat of private health care here in B.C. What else is part of the government plan to deal with the Brian Days of the world?

One shouldn't underestimate how difficult it's going to be to deal with the issue because the private clinics have developed over time. Partly they've developed because we have not been able to fund the public health care system to the extent possible. And we've not been able to do the innovations that are necessary to ensure that our system is able to cope with all of the stresses and strains with the resources that we have.

We need to diversify our approach to health care and to take the stress and the strain off the system so that then we can begin to not need the Day clinic or any other private clinic. And I know there are always issues around WCB and ICBC. But those are public policy issues that have been in place for some time. We need to take a look at those as well.

The WCB is a prickly issue because injured health care workers are forced by the WCB to be treated at private clinics. And WCB support for private clinics is the bread and butter that keeps them operating. Are you prepared to change the policy?

Yes, I am. But we can only change that once we are sure that we can send the workers back to work after giving care without them having to wait. And that's why I keep talking about providing new resources, trying new approaches to take the stress and strain off the health care system so that we don't need the Day clinic when we need the worker treated right away or the ICBC chairman treated right away.

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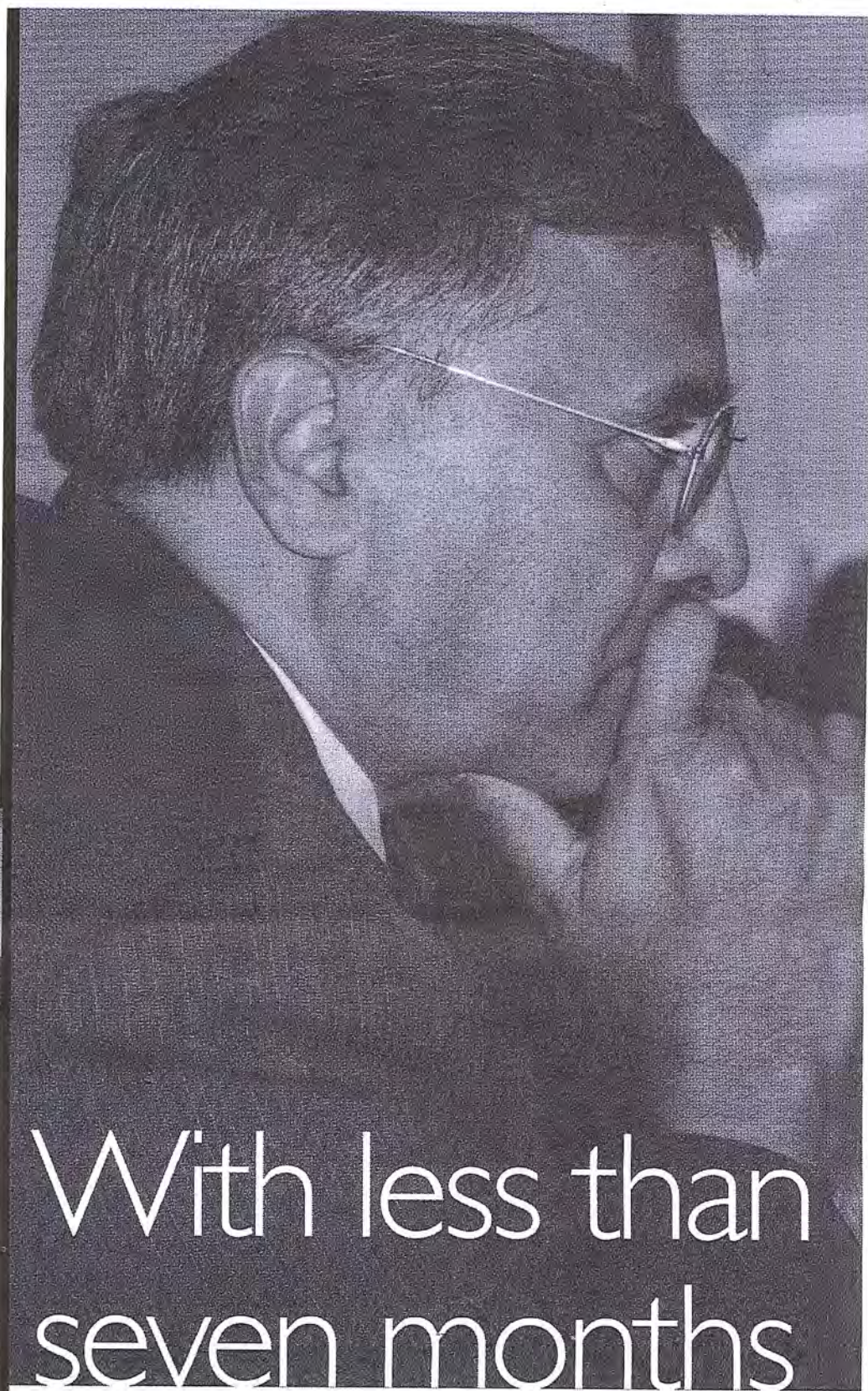
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HEU 22nd Biennial Convention,
Richmond Inn

OCTOBER 15

World March of Women 2000,
March on Parliament,
Ottawa, Ontario

OCTOBER 23-25

15th Wage Policy Conference,
Richmond Inn

OCTOBER 22-27

CUPE Week Long School,
Vancouver Island

OCTOBER 29-31

CLC Environment Conference,
Vancouver

NOVEMBER 11

Remembrance Day,
Office closed November 13

NOVEMBER 27-DECEMBER 1

B.C. Federation of Labour Convention,
Trade and Convention Centre,
Vancouver

December 6

Women's Day of Remembrance

HEU's welcome mat

HEU's organizing department has been busy this year, resulting in many new members in the community health, community social services, paramedical and facilities sectors.

In community social services, there are two new certifications in Victoria. Peers Support Services provide 24-hour residential care for physically and mentally challenged persons. The other Victoria cert in this sector is Namaste Transition to Community.

New members at Para-Med Home Health Care, a division of Extendicare Inc., work at several different locations. Each one is a separate community health certification. On Feb. 24, the Labour Relations Board granted one cert for office staff at three of the locations: Coquitlam, Abbotsford and Surrey. On May 25, it replaced it with three separate certifications. Richmond and Prince George office staff were also granted their own individual certs. The Victoria office staff became HEU members on Aug. 8, and Vancouver office staff joined on Aug. 30. Altogether the

new Para-Med Home Health Care members number 94.

More community health workers joined HEU from Bella Coola Home Support on May 19. Pending approval, they will be part of the Bella Coola local. Also in this subsector is the Keremeos and District Home Support (clerical workers), with four new members. They are part of the Penticton local and gained their certification on Feb. 21. And the program coordinator at the CMHA South Okanagan Similkameen Branch (Crisis Line) became a member of the Penticton Health Care local on March 22.

In Vancouver, six St. Bernard House workers became members of HEU's Coast Foundation local on April 7. This is a specialized mental health residence that has beds for 12 male clients. In B.C.'s interior, Jubilee Care House provides mental health services, including at the Williams Lake Clubhouse with a work centre, a drop-in and home support program. Fifteen HEU members from Jubilee certified on April 7 and will be part of the Williams Lake local.

HEU welcomes two new paramedical members, a social worker at Craigend Rest Home in Burnaby and a paramedical worker at Community Mental Health Services and Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centre in Revelstoke.

In the facilities sector, there are 110 new members at Rainbow Intermediate Care Home in Prince George who voted to transfer the jurisdiction of their bargaining unit from CUPE to HEU. One hundred six new members work at the Central Care Home in Victoria. Their certification was granted on Feb. 11. There are 74 new HEU members in the Delta View local. They work at Delta View Habilitation Centre, a multilevel care facility located behind Ladner Private Hospital.

Two new independent certifications bring 173 members, 55 at South Granville Park Lodge in Vancouver and 118

at Glenwarren Lodge in Victoria. South Granville local was certified on Nov. 2, 1999. This is a poly party (with BCNU) certification at this long-term care and retirement living facility. Glenwarren Lodge in Victoria is another long-term care facility.

Welcome to all these new members.



One certification, two locals for Cancer Control

The amalgamation of the B.C. Cancer Agency certifications became official on August 2.

This is a special agreement for the union, because the facilities are not in the same geographical area. As a matter of fact, they span four different health regions: the Vancouver/Richmond, the Okanagan/Similkameen, the South Fraser Valley and the Capital health regions.

There are two locals in the certification of over 550 members. One is called the Vancouver Island Cancer Control local located in Victoria. The Cancer Control local is made up of the Vancouver, Fraser Valley and Kelowna facilities.

Each local elects its executive from among its membership, and each site has its own shop stewards.

WORKING TV - WE'RE MOVING!

Working TV is moving to the web with a new server and a new focus on short internet friendly videos. The good news for HEU? We'll be available to more of you across B.C. Check us out at <www.workingtv.com>.

Download RealPlayer free at <www.real.com>.

Coming up on Working TV:

October/November 2000, a focus on biotechnology with weekly features leading up to the Nov. 10 Bio-Tech Conference in Vancouver. After Nov. 10 we'll bring you highlights from the conference on community television throughout British Columbia.

Check <www.workingtv.com/tvBroadcasts.html> for broadcast times in your area.



Coffee break



All stories guaranteed factual.
Sources this issue: CALM,
UFCW, CAW, CEP 630, Internet

Sacrificial lambs

"I have always felt that workers really are almost like sacrificial lambs. They are paying the price for us to learn whether or not these chemicals are harmful. Now, for that reason, I feel very strongly that environmentalists should be very, very supportive of labour, because workers in many ways are, unwittingly, the canaries in the coal mine. Environmental issues are an up-front concern to workers, as well as to the rest of society." ... David Suzuki

The corporate way

A company decided to have an employee suggestion competition. One worker submitted a suggestion that they post announcements on the dozen bulletin boards instead of printing 200 memos and distributing them to everyone. The worker won, got a helium

balloon with the company logo, one share of stock, and yes, a memo announcing it went out to 200 people.

Science facts?

The following are quotes from 11-year-olds' science exams:

- Before giving a blood transfusion, find out if the blood is affirmative or negative.
- To remove dust from the eye, pull the eye down over the nose.
- For a nosebleed: Put the nose much lower than the body until the heart stops.
- For drowning: Climb on top of the person and move up and down to make artificial perspiration.
- For fainting: Rub the person's chest or, if a lady, rub her arm above the hand instead. Or put the head between the knees of the nearest medical doctor.

- For a dog bite: put the dog away for several days. If he has not recovered, then kill it.
- For asphyxiation: Apply artificial respiration until the patient is dead.
- To prevent contraception: Wear a condominium.
- For a head cold: Use an agonizer to spray the nose until it drops in your throat.
- To keep milk from turning sour: Keep it in the cow.

Scab in the Woods?

Professional golfing superstar Tiger Woods is facing serious disciplinary charges by the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), of which he is a member, for crossing picket lines to make a TV ad in Canada earlier this summer.

Woods needs SAG membership to make filmed endorsements with unionized crew and other industry workers. The guild and the American



Federation of Television and Radio Artists are on strike against U.S. commercial producers. Most actors and celebrities have honoured picket lines, but some like Woods have skirted the issue by filming outside the U.S.

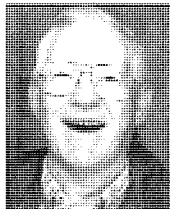
Canadian actor Donald Sutherland, who is a spokesperson for Volvo, has stopped making commercials for them until the strike is over. He says he won't be a scab.

HEU people

Activist says good-bye

Bob Rodgers, a carpenter at Children's Hospital for 23 years, retired at the end of September.

One of the local's dedicated activists, he always looked out for the membership. He served as vice-chair, chief shop steward, trustee, union counselor and assistant secretary-treasurer. And innumerable committees. And he was always front and center at rallies to defend Medicare and fighting for fairness for health care workers. His co-workers will miss him.



RODGERS

Early retirement for care aide

Dogwood care aide retiree Kwai Fong Ha (Alice) retired on Feb. 28, 2000. She worked for 10 years at the facility, but retired early due to high blood pressure and diabetes.

25-year St. Pauls veteran retires

Peter Stokes retired in August after 25 years of service to St. Pauls Hospital.

Stokes started at the facility in August of 1975 as a housekeeper. When he retired, he had been a precision instrument tech for 10 years. In between those two job descriptions, he was a porter and an OR aide.

He served on his local executive as secretary-treasurer for quite a few years. He considers one of his major contributions to his local to be making an index of the local's executive back to 1959. "That way if the local needs information on anyone who has ever served on the executive back to 1959, they just have to look in the index," he says.



Peter Stokes, HEU president Fred Muzin and chairperson Raj Sandhanwalia at Stokes' retirement party on July 22.

He says he enjoyed serving on the executive, but thought it was important to make way for the younger folk.

"That's the only way all the work you do can continue on into the future," says Stokes. "Otherwise, it would just stop when you go."

Quilt to be displayed

Quilter Lydia Shimek will be exhibiting her Teddy Bear quilt in the Atira Transition House quilt show which will be called *Reclaiming Tradition, Women's Political Expression Through Quilting*.

The show will be at Kwantlen University College in Surrey Oct. 20 to 22.

Shimek's quilt was featured in the September/October 1993 issue of the *Guardian*. She invites HEU members to come see the display and to say hello.

Living on the Sunshine Coast

Sister Elizabeth "Libby" Johnson retired from Richmond Lions Manor last year after 25 years of service as a laundry aide. She served her union sisters and brothers as secretary treasurer, shop steward, trustee, warden and conductor.



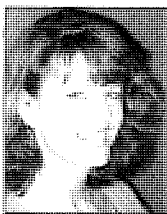
JOHNSON

The staff at Richmond Lions Manor miss her and wish her health and much happiness.

She and her husband built a home in Sechelt with a beautiful ocean view. Now they have time to spend with their grandchildren and to travel in their RV.

Gone fishing

Harry Phillips who worked in stores at Dogwood Lodge also retired last year. He moved to Victoria, bought a boat and went fishing. He became a member of HEU in 1987 and held the office of trustee.



ZANDER

Staff

Kim Zander is a new face in the HEU Provincial Office. A rep II, she came to the union after serving as a tenant advocate for seven years with the Tenants'

Rights Action Coalition.

She's worked for HEU before - with Libby Davies on a human rights investigators project. Her first trade union involvement was as a member and organizer with the Fisherman's Union.

Julie Eckert is the new human resources coordinator. A registered nurse, she decided to become an LPN instead. Why?

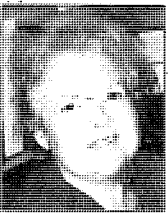


ECKERT

"Those were the days before the BCNU. I saw that HEU negotiated good wages for their members. I liked that, so I joined HEU as an LPN," she says.

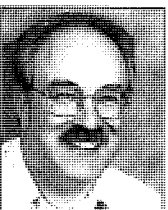
She's been on staff at HEU since 1987.

Susan Fisher is now the servicing director for the Providence health care group, the South Fraser Valley, Fraser Valley and some community locals. She first came to HEU as a rep II in 1993 from the Office and Professional Employees International Union where she served as a rep for four years. Fisher says the challenges and the diversity of



FISHER

issues in her job keep her on her toes. "I like the opportunity to meet more of the membership in different locals," she says.



WILSON

Long-term staff member retires

Keith Wilson says he thinks he was HEU's

longest serving staff member when he retired recently. He started at the union in February 1975 as an organizer and building janitor. He came from Gorge Road Hospital, where he worked as a cleaner and served as chair and chief shop steward.

At HEU he moved up through the ranks from rep I to director of organizing.

Wilson plans to go to England to do some genealogy research. In the meantime, he and his wife Gail enjoy babysitting their grandchildren. "Working for HEU was a wonderful experience for me," says Wilson. "I hope I contributed to the union's life and to its future."

EQUITY PHONE LINE

1.800.663.5813, ext. 514
Lower Mainland 739.1514

press 1

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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.

PROVINCIAL OFFICES:

- Vancouver site
1-800-663-5813
- Abbotsford site
1-800-404-2020

NORTHERN OFFICE:

- Prince George
1-800-663-6539

OKANAGAN OFFICE:

- Kelowna
1-800-219-9699

VANCOUVER ISLAND OFFICES:

- Victoria site
1-800-742-8001
- Nanaimo site
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The president and the Premier

CUPE president Judy Darcy encouraged Ujjal Dosanjh to stand up for public Medicare.

PAGE 3



Treasure in unlikely places

Ray Melville rescues treasures that tell the history of Royal Columbian Hospital.

PAGE 6



Human rights abuses in Burma

Burmese labour leader puts out an SOS for his country women and men.

PAGE 11



Organizers bring in members

HEU extends welcome mat to new members from all around the province.

PAGE 14

AGREEMENT NUMBER 1571931

Return address:
The Guardian
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LEONARD



TRAIL OF TEARS PAINTING BY LEONARD PELTIER

PELTIER

Leonard Peltier – North America's Prisoner of Conscience
Leonard Peltier, an Anishinabe-Lakota political prisoner, has spent 24 years in prison despite US government admission that they do not know who committed the crime.

On June 26, 1975 shots were fired between the FBI, members of the American Indian Movement and others ending with AIM member Joseph Killright Stuntz and FBI agents Ronald Williams and Jack Coler losing their lives. Peltier, and three others, were charged with the murder of the two agents. Fleeing to Canada, Peltier was arrested in February, 1976. The extradition case was a travesty as it was based primarily on the testimony of Myrtle Poor Bear who even the U.S. prosecutor later agreed was an incompetent witness.

The Trial

Peltier has always maintained his innocence. Without eye witness testimony the case was largely based on ballistic evidence that supposedly tied Peltier to the scene of the crime. Later the FBI admitted that the report used in the trial was incorrect and that there was no evidence linking the fired bullets to Peltier's rifle.

The prosecutors now claim that while there is no evidence that Peltier killed the officers, he had "aided and abetted" those who did. But no facts indicate that Leonard Peltier knowingly assisted the killer of the two officers. Most legal experts agree that Peltier has served far longer in prison than others found guilty of aiding and abetting.

Clemency Campaign

At this point the best hope to attaining Peltier's freedom lies in persuading US President Bill Clinton to grant clemency. The clemency power is a broad one and is often utilized to promote "public welfare and healing". Clinton, in the final year of his presidency, can choose to promote healing and reconciliation with aboriginal people by releasing Peltier. The Canadian Clemency Campaign represents a collaboration between Labour, the Leonard Peltier Defence Committee, and new partners from the Aboriginal and justice communities.

Join the Campaign to Achieve Clemency for Leonard Peltier!

- Call the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee – Canada
 - (416) 439-1893 or email lpdccto@web.ca
 - Campaign materials (posters, post-cards, draft letters, updates)
- Form a clemency campaign group in your community
- Tell the world that you want justice for Leonard - buy a t-shirt (same image as above)
 - call (613) 229-9800 or visit our web site www.nupge.ca to order
- Contribute to the Campaign
 - Cheques payable to the Leonard Peltier Clemency Campaign Fund
 - c/o Ethel LaValley, Ontario Federation of Labour, 15 Gervais Drive, Suite 202, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M3C 1Y8



national union