

Guardian



FALL 2001 • VOLUME 19 NUMBER 3 • THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION



We are officially moved

Open house inaugurates our new Burnaby headquarters.

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HEU uncovers secret scheme

Liberals plan to build private hospitals in B.C. communities.

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Labour fights back

At a Victoria rally workers tell Liberals the honeymoon is over.

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Rough guide to Colombia

Thirty Canadians found out first-hand about the monstrous problems faced by Colombian unionists.

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Lessons for youth

B.C. students can learn about labour's history from new teaching guide.

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SPECIAL REPORT

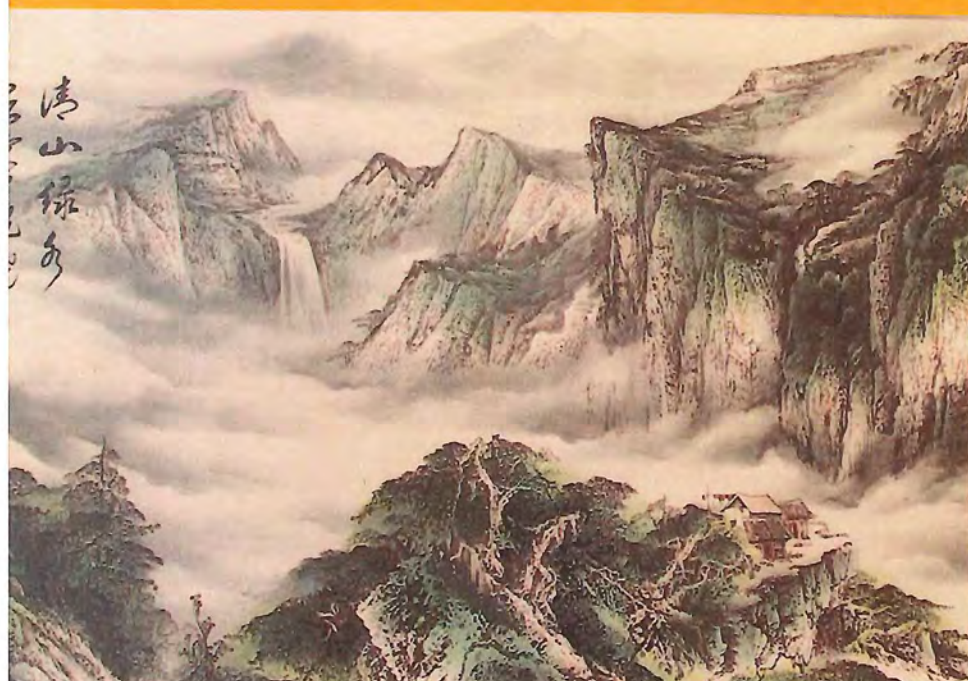
The attack on Medicare

Liberals are attacking Medicare, breaking all their election promises. And a ground-breaking study says hospital support workers are crucial to patient care.

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BRIAN CLARKSON PHOTO



They won an uphill struggle for justice

So, members of the Victoria Chinatown local say 'thank you' with this painting entitled 'Our union as strong as a mountain.' **PAGE 5**

COMMENT

HEU, CUPE stronger with each other

by Chris Allnutt

BRITISH COLUMBIAN workers are being pushed backwards down a path that must be all too familiar to our sisters and brothers across Canada. Gordon Campbell and his Liberals are not very original in their attacks against public services like Medicare. The Mike Harris or Ralph Kleins have tried it all before.

We must resist with all the force we can muster and push back, and the most powerful tool we have is our numbers and our solidarity. In the battle to protect public health care we are up against some incredibly powerful forces.

HEU is a large union; there's no doubt about that. But it's not big enough on its own to stop Campbell or even slow him down very much. That's why our affiliation with the B.C. Federation of Labour, the Canadian Labour Congress is so important.

And it's the reason our membership in the Canadian Union of Public Employees is essential.

CUPE has the resources and more importantly perhaps, it has the experience under its belt of fighting against the massive privatization of public services that others set out to achieve across Canada.

In Ontario Harris has resigned. Public sector employees in that province – many of them CUPE members – don't doubt that people



would not have died and gotten sick in Walkerton if Harris had not cut back so drastically on public services. Harris has said he is stepping down for personal reasons, but whatever the reason workers in Ontario are happy to see him go.

Like Mike Harris did soon after he was elected, Gordon Campbell is openly musing about privatization of health care. British Columbians are going to fight this; we cannot allow it to happen.

CUPE's cutting edge campaign to defend Medicare has been national, fought in every province. Our union was – and is – part of that very effective and innovative

campaign. In 2000 HEU members participated in the national ambulance tour. With CUPE Local 873 members, HEU members traveled with that special Save Medicare ambulance, visiting communities from Vancouver Island to the Alberta border, and then on to Edmonton to protest the passage of the infamous Bill 11 in Alberta.

Proudly on display in the lobby of HEU's new Burnaby headquarters is an exhibit designed and produced by CUPE that illustrates the history of Medicare in Canada.

CUPE not only has the practice of having participated in campaigns to

save Medicare in Alberta, Ontario, B.C. and other provinces, but it is the body that fights the campaign on the national front, calling the federal government to task for its own failure to defend Medicare when provincial governments attempt to whittle it away and sell it off piece by piece to private interests.

Being part of a national union that represents public sector workers across the country will be key to our ability to stave off everything that Campbell's Liberals throw at us. And, sisters and brothers, you can be sure they have a whole lot of stuff up their sleeves that we haven't seen yet.

HEU has its own history and its own store of experience, but our association with CUPE will only make us stronger. And CUPE will be better for it, too.

'We must resist with all the force we can muster'

voice/mail

THE GUARDIAN WELCOMES YOUR FEEDBACK. SEND LETTERS TO 5000 NORTH FRASER WAY, BURNABY V5J 5M5 OR PHONE 1-800-909-4994. PLEASE BE BRIEF.

May-Bennett fight not over

In June 1991 the staff at May Bennett were told we would all be laid off, and the home would be converted into "sheltered housing."

Under the guidance of the Provincial Executive, the great support of many loyal sisters and brothers in other Okanagan locals and the Friends of May Bennett, we were victorious after a four-week strike.

In September 2001 staff called to meet with the employer (Okanagan Similkameen Health Region) regarding the transition from intermediate care to a health center for the community. They told us that the physical layout of the home does not meet the needs of the resident population and renovations are not economical. We say the home has served its residents and staff very well for 20 years, and how much is it going to cost to convert 22 bedrooms into offices?

"Our home" is a small, comfortable, secure place for our 24 seniors to live in. Our residents are well cared for and we as staff do

not see them as "clients," they are part of our extended family.

Help! We need to keep the home open and the current residents of May Bennett staying right where they are.

Please add your voice to mine, my co-workers and to those of the Friends of May Bennett.

RENA MIELKE,
Kelowna Local

HEU member goes to Asia

I am writing to let our Provincial Executive, International Solidarity Committee and other HEU members know about a trip my partner Mike Orders and I will be taking at the end of October this year.

We are joining the Canada Asia Pacific Network (CAPRN) tour to Hong Kong, Bangkok, Chang Mai and the Thai Burma border. There will be about eight trade unionists traveling together with a journalist.

Our itinerary to date includes meeting with representatives from the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, Thai trade unions, Karen and Mon trade union groups operating on the Thai Burma border, a group of folks who have been political prisoners inside Burma and an organization called WEAVE (Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment). WEAVE was established to work with women living on the Thai Burma border as

refugees from the military regime in Burma. The women and children produce clothing woven from cotton in their tra-

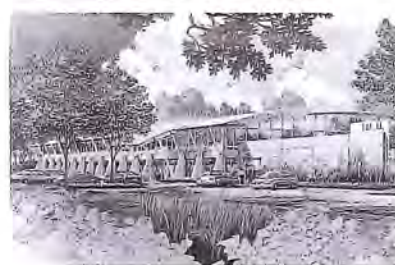
Name the centre contest

HEU has decided to extend the deadline for the Name the Centre Contest. The Provincial Executive is looking for a name for the conference centre at our new Burnaby digs that will honour the history of health care workers in this province. Or it could be the name of a Canadian or British Columbian labour hero, someone HEU members and other workers want to honour and remember.

So put on your thinking caps and send in your ideas to dfuller@heu.org or Name Contest, HEU Communications, 5000 North Fraser Way, Burnaby B.C. V5J 5M3, Attention Dale Fuller.

Deadline is Dec. 1, 2001. If two entries are the same, the earlier postmark (or-email date) "takes the cake" – which is a coveted HEU jacket with a fleece lining.

Thank you for the entries we have already received. They will be among those considered for the prize.



ditional way. WEAVE then markets the goods through non-governmental organizations to the western world. CAPRN is also trying to arrange meetings with health care workers on the Thai Burma border.

Multinationals are now establishing sweatshops on the Thai Burma border, I would imagine very similar to the Maquiladores. Unions are organizing inside those sweat shops and we hope to have an opportunity to meet with their representatives also.

Aung San Suu Kyi, while her husband and children live in England, continues to lead the National League for Democracy in Burma. After winning an overwhelming victory at the polls in

1990 even while Suu Kyi herself was under house arrest, the NLD is still unrecognized by the current military regime.

Mike and I have visited Thailand in the past but we are feeling very fortunate to be going back with this group of brothers and sisters to help where we can.

I am looking forward to sharing their struggle with my sisters and brothers in HEU. I will be telling their story at our Nelson local meeting in December and welcoming the opportunity to speak to others within our union.

The tour begins on Oct. 29 and ends on Nov. 10/01.

HEATHER COMPTON,
Nelson Local

Guardian

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

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What we're up to

Clearing the air

The Clean Air Coalition of B.C., comprised of organizations including HEU, BCGEU, Canadian Auto Workers, B.C. Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Cancer Society-B.C./Yukon and the B.C. Lung Association, is campaigning to demand that the provincial government implement and then immediately enforce current Workers' Compensation Board Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) regulations.

Gordon Campbell's Liberals

over-ruled the WCB decision to implement the ETS regulations in B.C. workplaces scheduled to take effect Sept. 10, citing the need for more study of second-hand smoke dangers.

Upon government's announcement that it would delay until at least April 2002 implementation of the regulations, HEU condemned the move which would delay control of workers' exposure to second-hand smoke in B.C.'s long-term care facilities, where more than 10,000 HEU caregivers work.

"The minister is staying true to the Liberal's priority - the health and welfare of business," said HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "One wonders whether the health



and safety of B.C. workers is important in the New Era."

Bear Creek settles

In August, the 55 HEU members at Bear Creek Lodge, a private, for-profit multi-level seniors' care facility in Surrey, voted more than 70 per cent in favour of a new collective

agreement, after rejecting an earlier tentative deal that failed to address concerns over the length of the contract, wages and seniority during job action.

The new settlement does deal satisfactorily with these three issues and retains the improvements agreed to previously in the areas of temporary jobs, responsibility pay for registered nurses, night nurse pay, scheduling of care aides' shifts and benefit improvements.



HEU welcomed sisters, brothers and others to celebrate with us as we officially opened our new Provincial Office in Burnaby on Oct. 10. Sister Gail Hogarth (left), HEU president Fred Muzin and Sister Cathy Peters cut the inaugural cake while Sister Vicki Poburn looked on.

Politically active

Jennifer Neely, an HEU community social services worker from Victoria's Kardel local and an activist on CUPE's National Young Workers' Group, recently

ran for city councillor in Saanich. Neely placed third in the September by-election and vows to run again in November 2002.

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Joint trusteeship pension funds' saving grace

Municipal Pension Plan trustees are anticipating a surplus, but will not know exactly how much until the end of the year.

Even though investments in the stock market were on a downward spiral for most of the year, made even worse by the events of Sept. 11, Steven Polak, who represents HEU on the pension board, is confident that the plan's investments are diversified enough to enjoy a certain amount of protection from the ups and downs of the stock market.

And secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt says it's a good thing the unions were able to negotiate joint trusteeship of the Municipal Pension Plan. "Given the political times we are living through right now, workers have at least some say in how their pension funds are invested," he says.

"I wouldn't want the Liberal government and their friends being the only ones deciding where the sizeable funds contributed by public sector workers towards their pensions are to be invested."

HEALTH CARE workers learn of secret government scheme to build a private facility in the Fraser Valley to replace the aging MSA Hospital.



Union ready to fight private hospital scheme for Abbotsford

Date set for pay equity hearing

After considerable pressure on health employers, HEU and its union partners have secured a hearing date with arbitrator Stephen Kelleher to resolve a dispute over the allocation of pay equity adjustments for 2001, 2002 and 2003.

HEU wants to target pay equity monies to Licensed Practical Nurses and Care Aides, who experience among the largest gaps between their current wages and their pay equity target rates - over 12 per cent difference as of May 1, 2001.

"Health employers aren't interested in targeting pay equity monies to undervalued members of the nursing team," says secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "But with the support of HEU LPNs and Care Aides, we'll put forward a powerful case for pay equity justice in November."

GOVERNMENT officials admit that a private health care facility is in the works for the Fraser Valley, after HEU blew the whistle Oct. 19 on a secret scheme hatched by Gordon Campbell's Liberals for a privately financed, privately owned, and partly privately operated hospital in Abbotsford.

"It's the most brazen attack yet by any provincial government to undermine Medicare," says union spokesperson Chris Allnutt about the plan to replace the aging MSA General Hospital. "We're deeply troubled by this development, and we're going to work to make sure it doesn't happen."

Appearing at Premier Campbell's health summit Oct. 22, HEU's secretary-business manager warned the Liberal leader that the move is a step backward and that the union would be mounting an all-out campaign to stop it.

Noting that it would be a Canadian first, Allnutt says that the privatization scheme is based on a model first developed in England by the Thatcher government. The Fraser Valley Health Region would lease space over a 30-year period, which would guarantee a significant rate of return for the developer involved.

The preliminary blueprints for the new facility don't provide any space for support services like dietary and laundry. "This is how government plans forced privatization of these kinds of services," Allnutt charged. "It's also likely that the developer who builds and owns the private hospital will be offered an iron-clad long-term franchise to provide these services."

Meanwhile, speaking to the United Nurses of Alberta general meeting in late October, a British expert on so-called private finance initiatives warned that British Columbians should be "very worried" about Campbell's plans.

"Britain has been using private financing sources in health care for a number of years and the results have been disastrous," says Professor Allyson Pollock, a University college London health policy specialist.

Fraser Valley residents have fought long and hard for a new facility to improve the quality of care they're able to receive, says Allnutt. "But Gordon Campbell's private scheme will result in second-class care for local citizens. They deserve better."

Construction of the private hospital scheme is expected to begin in 15 months and be completed by early 2005.

'Government plans forced privatization'

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

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Neely says that running in the civic election was a great experience — one that more trade unionists should consider trying.

"As a person in the labour

movement, I believe it's important to have representation in civic government," she says. "Decisions made at the local government level often immediately and most directly impact the lives of British

Columbians, so progressive voices must be on councils. And we need to support these progressive candidates by getting out and voting for them."

Come on in

HEU's Provincial Executive will be breaking new ground when the union's governing body opens one day of its meetings to members come the New Year.

The first open meeting will be on Thursday, Jan. 31, 2002 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the new Provincial Office. The second open meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 19, possibly in Victoria.

Watch for more information on your union bulletin boards and on the HEU web site.

Members who want to come are asked to call Vaile Long in advance to confirm attendance and to check that unexpected events have not forced a post-



OLIVER CHRONICLE PHOTO

This summer, when Health Sciences Association paramedics stood up to Campbell's Liberal government and defiantly took to the streets in their fight for a new collective agreement, HEU members were right there beside them.



HEU was well represented again this year at Vancouver's Pride Parade. Members from the union's lesbian and gay standing committee marched along with other labour activists and proudly carried our "Together in Pride" banner.

ponement. Long can be reached at 604/438-5000 or on the toll free line at 1-800-663-5813.

Taking care of business

The HEU Kelowna Amalgamated local has introduced a new — and highly successful — way to do business at its

monthly membership meetings.

After taking the idea to the members, the local executive implemented an agenda that focuses on one department or area each month, giving people a good opportunity to talk about their issues and share

Trailblazer 'just did it' But B.C.'s first female plumber had to win over her union brothers

by Brenda Jordison

THE TIME IS 1965. Women's wages were low. With no legislation dealing with equal pay for equal work, blatant discrimination was alive and well.

There was no recognition in 1965 that this was a problem. Women who worked side-by-side with men, doing the same job, accepted, as did the rest of society, that they would be paid less.

Although Louise Jordison would not receive a man's wages, she leaned toward traditional male employment. It still paid better than traditional women's jobs.

She had a very large family to support; six children, which would eventually increase to 11.

The sixties were not conducive to women working; consequently day care was scarce. Certainly there was no help in the form of subsidies or assurances of quality by the licensing of day care. Somehow, though, Jordison was able to work in a field that was traditionally male and take care of her children.

This alone is a testament to this woman.

Jordison says it's amazing what can be achieved. As she puts it, "I just did it. It was never easy, but we often have strength and determination we are not even aware we have."

She says it was not really until she retired and had enough time to reflect that she realized she had a lot to be proud of.

Back then, she was a woman struggling to support a family. She was holding down three jobs, working nights at a gambling club, then going home to bake pastries to sell at the Alano Club's coffee shop. After a few hours sleep, she'd gather up the pastries, arrive at the club, do the janitorial work, set up and open the coffee bar.

Early afternoon, when other help arrived, she would take off to the parking lot between the Odeon Theatre and the English Sweet Shop on Victoria's Yates Street. The entrance to the parking lot housed a counter, time clock and a rack for car keys. Valet

parking was Jordison's job. It was early evening before she finished. Then she'd go home, catch a few hours of sleep and go back to the gambling club. When she had time off, she'd pick up extra shifts at the parking lot.

She kept up this pace for a couple of years.

The manager at the coffee shop was married to the owner of a plumbing and contracting company — a union shop.

Stan Johns often had coffee at the Alano Club where he learned of Jordison's struggle to support her family.

Being a man way ahead of his time, he offered Jordison an apprenticeship as a plumber. He said if she became an apprentice, as it was a union shop she would be paid for her work, not her gender. Her wages would be enough to support her family. His offer changed her life.

She continued to work at the parking lot on weekends until she was up to the journeyman rates. The union she belonged to

was the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union, Local 324.

Johns, though forward thinking himself, was clever enough to acknowledge the reality of the times. He informed Jordison that after she obtained her apprenticeship, he would hire her, thus securing her membership in the union. "I got in through the back door," she says.

Thirty-five years later her pride is still very evident. "In those days you paid your union dues directly to the union hall, which was housed in the old union building on Quadra," she says.

When the general membership became aware that a woman had joined their union, congratulations were not on the agenda. Jordison was not invited when they called a special meeting to deal with it. Members were very concerned. Could she do the job? After all, this was man's work. The issue that raised the most anger and debate was the fact that she was taking a job away from a man, a man who supported his family. Some members were also galled with the union's

BALANCING



IT ALL



NOW THAT SHE'S RETIRED Lou Jordison, as she prefers to be called, can reflect on all she's done — and is still doing.

policy of pay for the job, not the person. Of course, their argument didn't hold water because Jordison was the sole breadwinner in her family.

Lack of tolerance, understanding and acceptance were standing in her way, but she is quick to point out that the union ultimately accepted her into its ranks.

Jordison fondly remembers her apprenticeship, but admits it wasn't that difficult. "Once you have done the fixtures the first or second time, you pretty much have it," she says. But later on, underground plumbing presented more challenges. "That was interesting and extremely hard work."

Family circumstances led Jordison to opt for jobs closer to home, rather than travel around as she had been doing. She went to work for Sears in their plumbing and heating division and did quite well there. But she ran into more opposition from her male colleagues there.

Today she is retired and an active member of her Vancouver Island community.

She worked on many political campaigns, but never ran for office. "Being a big mouth on the sidelines can in a lot of ways be more effective," she says. "Besides, I always had a thing for the underdog, no matter what their affiliation or beliefs. I feel it's more important to do what's right, instead of being right."

- Brenda Jordison is the chair of the Pacific Rim local in Victoria. And she's Lou Jordison's daughter.
- **BALANCING IT ALL** is a regular Guardian column about the challenges facing women activists.

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

their experiences. Concerns are namelessly recorded, and then later raised by a steward with the manager responsible with answers are subsequently posted on the union bulletin board.

In the last three months, dietary, housekeeping and nursing have been featured.

Maureen Shepherd, local chair, says people seem to really like the new format and meeting attendance has

increased. "It's been really successful," she said. "One person's concern becomes everyone's concern. Members relate to what others say, regardless of where they're working. It's great."

Kudos to our graduates

HEU caregivers enrolled in the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency's Prior Learning Assessment for Resident Care Attendants Program had all their hard work rewarded when they received their certificates from Kwantlen University College at a recent graduation ceremony in Richmond.

On-the-job assessment means that aides with several years of experience and knowledge can earn a RCA credential from a provincial college without going back to school full-time.

As strong as a mountain

HEU Victoria Chinatown Care Centre members have presented the union with an original painting, "Our Union as Strong as a Mountain," to show their appreciation of the support given them in their protracted fight for equality in their workplace.

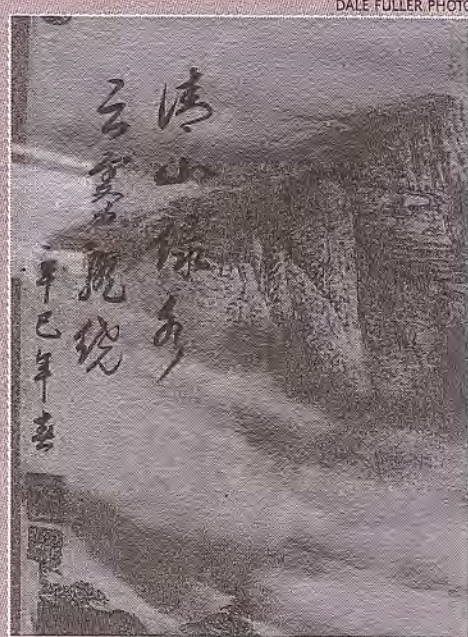
The painting was commissioned from an artist in China especially for HEU and bears the title in both Chinese and English.

Since their June 1999 certification, the VCCC caregivers, who belong to the Mount St. Mary's local, have succeeded in

correcting workplace injustices – including race-based discrimination – and significantly improving working and caring conditions in the seniors' care facility.



HEU congratulates our members from Adanac Lodge, Dogwood Lodge, Kinsman Retirement Centre, Rosewood Manor, Inglewood Private Hospital and the now-closed Kensington Private Hospital for their successes.



DALE FULLER PHOTO

Union leaders say 'Stop the cuts'

B.C. Fed president warns of job loss, recession

LABOUR LEADERS from B.C.'s private and public sector unions joined B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair on Oct. 23 to demand that government sit down with labour, business and community groups to develop a new economic strategy.

In a submission to the legislature's Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, Sinclair said the government's massive tax cuts to corporations and the rich will cost British Columbians at least 14,000 jobs and slide the province into a deep recession.

"The government is planning another tax cut totalling \$1 billion for January 2002," he said. "We are here to call on the Liberals to defer what amounts to another massive reduction in provincial revenues."

Reminding the government of their claim that tax cuts would stimulate the economy, he said it's time to own up to the fact that isn't going to happen.

"It's now clear the tax cuts will not pay for themselves," he said. "And the program cuts to pay for them will have a brutal effect on working families by reducing critical services at the same time they depress economic growth."

Secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt, who was part of the delegation accompanying Sinclair to Victoria, agreed.

"This is nothing but a tax shift. The wealthy get big tax cuts, programs are cut and working people have to pay for the services that used to be universally available to all, paid for by our taxes."

Besides calling on the government to defer the January tax cut, the labour

'Tax cuts will not pay for themselves'



MARGI BLAMEY PHOTO

MEMBERS from Gorge Road Hospital held their HEU local banner high and cheered loud and long with more than 800 other trade unionists and community activists at the B.C. Federation of Labour-sponsored rally.

leaders called on the government to forget about balancing the budget for the time being, instead working to maintain funding for vital public services.

After the labour groups' submission, more than 800 rank and file union members packed a rally in the Auditorium of the Royal B.C. Museum.

"We hope that Campbell was listening," says HEU president Fred Muzin. "Working people can't just be ignored. We want cooperation, not confrontation – to develop an economic strategy that protects services, jobs and commu-

nities. Even if that means the rich won't get another tax break and the budget won't be balanced right away."

As Muzin wrapped up his speech, he signaled to the government that the honeymoon was over and that British Columbians would be holding MLAs accountable for broken election promises.

The crowd, many of whom carried banners and balloons, filled the museum's main hall and overflowed onto the plaza outside. They loudly applauded the speakers and came up with their own chants and slogans including "Gordon Campbell and the B.C. Liars" and "Not a new era – a new error!"

Teachers say yes to strike

In their first ever province-wide strike vote, B.C. teachers have voted 91.4 per cent in favour of strike action.

British Columbia Teachers' Federation president David Chudnovsky says he is pleased with the vote because it signals a strong sense of confidence in the union's bargaining committee. "And

we're gratified that such a tremendous majority of our members participated in the strike vote," he said. Over 80 per cent of teachers in schools and on-call cast their ballots.

Teachers are supporting BCTF's bargaining stance which is all about protecting and improving public education, as well as achieving a fair and reasonable raise for teachers.

"Our goal is to improve the conditions under which students learn. We want smaller class sizes, more specialist teachers and better support for stu-

dents with special needs," says Chudnovsky.

But the employer is intent on cutting those services and staff. Chudnovsky notes their proposals put the quality of public education in danger. "That, combined with the recently announced funding freeze, would be disastrous for students," he says.

"Our members know what defending public services is all about," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "We are all in this fight together. The government must unfreeze funding

for health care and education – those freezes mean cuts and they have already begun."

After 45 days at the bargaining table, says Chudnovsky, there have been no significant clauses signed off. BCTF will begin measured strike action if the B.C. Public School Employers' Association does not remove their concession demands from the bargaining table. "We need to work together to improve educational services for our children, and negotiate a fair and reasonable raise for teachers," he concluded.

PRESIDENT'S DESK



Anti-terrorism law imperils democracy

by Fred Muzin

SINCE SEPT. 11th, a feeling of nervousness lies just below the surface of all that we do. There is a fear that the actions and reactions of individuals beyond our control can at any moment plunge us into the darkness of a world war. We now realize how vulnerable we have become.

The stark contrast between the images of the twin towers jutting into the Manhattan skyline one second, versus the smoldering flesh and destruction at ground zero the next, has indelibly impressed on us that our democracy is extremely fragile. One of the consequences of corporate globalization is that international terrorism has also become universal.

Nothing can ever justify the despicable murder of innocent people by the airplane firebombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. While it is imperative that Canada plays an important role to ensure that the terrorists are brought to international justice, the actions of the Canadian government in tabling Bill C-36 go far beyond achieving that objective.

'Our democracy is extremely fragile'

The so called 'Anti-Terrorism Act' defines "terrorist activity" in part, as "an act or omission, in or outside Canada, that is intended to cause serious interference with or serious disruption of an essential service, facility or system, whether public or private, other than as a result of lawful advocacy, protest, dissent or stoppage of work ..."

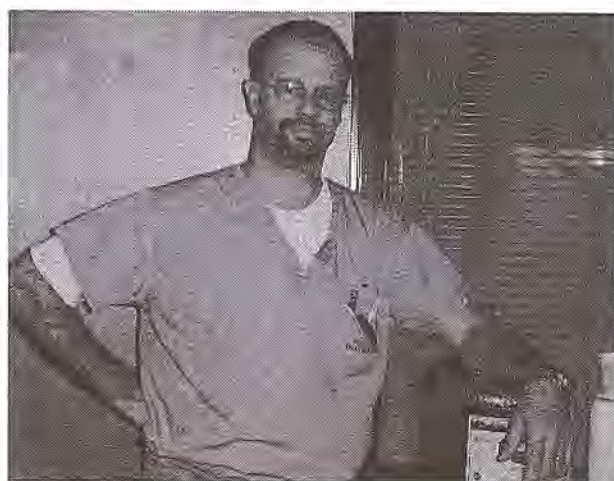
Who will decide which protests or work stoppages are illegal?

This law would appear to equate civil disobedience and peaceful protest, which are essential activities in promoting accountability in a truly democratic society, with terrorism. Will social justice activists now be threatened by detention and incarceration? When we engage in job action in health care to motivate our legitimate bargaining demands, do we suddenly become criminals? When we promote peace and disarmament and oppose war and militarism, have we turned into terrorists?

A better world is possible. As long as millions of people live in abject poverty and hopelessness while others dine on caviar, as long as people feel marginalized, not listened to and unable to create positive changes in their lives and the lives of their children, as long as acts of aggression, terrorism, intimidation and the abuse of power are acceptable methods to achieve success, violence will continue.

The provisions of Bill C-36 make it evident that the federal government has not grasped this reality. Its support of the police actions at the protests against APEC in Vancouver, and at the FTAA in Québec, coupled with the extent of the current 'anti-terrorism' legislation, are in direct opposition to the stated intent of creating a safer society.

While terrorists must be brought to justice, the remedies must not move us down the road from the democracy that we are attempting to protect towards a benevolent dictatorship or eventual police state.



TRACEY GREENBERG showed symptoms of Tourette syndrome at the age of nine, but wasn't diagnosed until his late 30s, at the same time as his nine-year old son.

LPN able to help son

When Tracey Greenberg's mother was pregnant with him, she was in a serious automobile accident.

Years later, when Greenberg was about nine or 10 years old, he began to experience strange symptoms. His facial muscles would twitch, his arms and legs would flail about, he would go into contortions. He'd make funny noises.

The doctors said it was because of the car accident. The truth is they didn't know what the problem was. They treated him with tranquilizers because they didn't know what else to do.

"I think it probably was not the best thing in the world to do for a little boy," says Greenberg, now an LPN at Richmond General Hospital and chair of the HEU local there. As he moved into adulthood, the symptoms gradually abated. He married and had a son and two daughters.

Over the years he would hear about a medical condition called Tourette syndrome (TS). "I noticed that a lot of the symptoms they described were suspiciously like the ones I had experienced as a boy," he says. He filed the information away in the back of his brain. It wasn't something he had to worry about anymore.

That is until his son started to exhibit the same symptoms when he was also about nine years old.

Right away Greenberg took himself and his son to a specialist for testing. They both tested positive for TS.

"That was three years ago," says Greenberg. His son's TS is more severe than what he experienced as a child. Ironically his own TS seems to have returned, although it is not readily evident to anyone but himself, he says.

Children who suffer from TS are usually heavily medicated, but Greenberg says his son has the advantage of having a father who has the same condition, who knows what he's going through and who doesn't judge his son for something over which he has no control.

"Sometimes TS kids seem to be rebellious — they call it defiant behaviour syndrome — and because my parents didn't know that, they just thought I was being disobedient," he says.

Greenberg's son is also able to benefit from advances in medicine and educational methods that were not available 30 years ago. Things aren't perfect, Greenberg says. Family members and others have to help him with schoolwork.

"I remember it was hard for me to make friends as a kid; I was different so I was bullied a lot. And the same happens to my son," he says. "I hope that some day my son can look at me and say, 'Hey, look at my dad. I should be able to do a lot with my life, too.'"



AFTER THE SHIFT

NOTEBOOK

Fight for justice never so important

by Dale Fuller

Two days after the towers of the World Trade Centre in New York came down, HEU president Fred Muzin sent a letter on behalf of HEU members, offering solidarity and condolences to the sisters and brothers of New York Local 1199 of the Service Employees' International Union.

New Yorkers say the World Trade Centre was a city within a city. In a tragic illustration of how a society cannot exist without workers to make it go, over a thousand of the dead and missing are staff and members from many unions.

Hundreds of members of the fire and police unions entered the buildings to rescue those trapped inside and lost their own lives in the process. Inside were an almost unimaginable variety of workers. Elevator operators, waiters, janitors, office employees, mailroom clerks, security guards, tour guides, civil servants, teachers, window washers, painters. The list goes on and on.

Many others also died in the Pentagon and on the hijacked airplanes. The AFL/CIO reports that over 100,000 Americans have lost their jobs as a direct result of the Sept. 11 attacks.



'A society cannot exist without workers to make it go'

New York health care workers rushed en masse to the hospitals, clinics and even impromptu street clinics to help where they could. Many were members of SEIU Local 1199, which represents over 220,000 health care workers in the city of New York.

HEU and SEIU Local 1199 have enjoyed close ties for many years. Dennis Rivera, the local's president, was the keynote speaker at HEU's 1991 Summer School.

Rivera said, in a message to his members, "At such a time it is easy to give in to feelings of anger, fear and hatred. It is our fervent wish that, instead, this tragedy helps to change our hearts, and to make us more understanding, accepting and loving of our neighbours and of our common human family."

Muzin echoed those thoughts in his letter. "This situation calls for true strength and purpose. Violence will only beget violence. We must not set aside our fight for social justice. It is the only way to make sense of this unbelievable tragedy."

The U.S. and Britain have since begun an all-out attack against Afghanistan, with the support of their allies, including Canada.

Protests across Canada have denounced the bombing of civilians in Afghanistan. Americans, too, have raised their voices against their government's actions, among them many union members.

SEIU New York Local 1199's executive presented these principles of unity to their membership: terrorism cannot be condoned or justified, the perpetrators should be brought to justice and war should be rejected as a response to the attack.

Unfortunately, the U.S. government is not listening.

A GUARDIAN SPECIAL REPORT

QUESTION OF COMMITMENT

"New era" promises were nonbinding, it seems.

PAGE 8-9

CAMPBELL'S BATTLE PLAN

Step-by-step he's leading us down privatization path

PAGE 8-9

PUBLIC SECTOR CUTS COMING

BCGEU president says service cuts mean job loss

PAGE 9

A CRITICAL PART OF HEALTH CARE

Study says hospital support work is distinct from hotel work

PAGE 10-11

SHODDY STUDY SHOT DOWN

Oft quoted report is full of holes and errors

PAGE 10



Premier Gordon Campbell

IT'S A QUESTION OF TRUST . . .

When the provincial Liberals say one thing and do another how can we be sure our public health care system is safe?

BROKEN PROMISES

B.C. Liberals ran on a campaign that promised, among many other items, the following moves in health care.

These promises are being broken:

- make private clinics redundant
- build 5,000 non-profit long-term care beds
- maintain health services
- respect for caregivers
- preserve employment security
- commitment that HEU members shouldn't worry about privatization
- tax cuts pay for themselves

It's taken less than six months for Gordon Campbell's agenda for health care and other public services to come into sharp focus.

Cuts to Pharmacare, private hospital schemes, delisting of medical services, attacks on the work and wages of HEU members – it's clear that the Campbell Liberals have dropped any pretense of sticking to their pre-election promise to maintain health services.

And they're just getting started. The new government has announced a three-year health care funding freeze – a move that will result in massive service cuts in communities right across B.C.

This *Guardian* special report takes a detailed look at how the Campbell government is setting up public health care in B.C. for its biggest fall.

We'll look at promises made and promises broken and we'll track how the B.C. Liberals have taken us to the brink of a wholesale privatization of health care in just five short months.

But HEU members are not standing idle while Campbell dismantles our health care system. Front-line activists are joining with each other and community allies at hearings, public meetings and rallies to challenge the

direction this new government is taking British Columbia. Turn the page to find out more about your union's ongoing fight back strategy to defend health care and other public services.

And it's not just health care in the cross hairs. Cuts of up to 50 per cent in ministries outside health and education are planned – a move that will deprive British Columbians of critical public services and has the potential to throw tens of thousands of public employees out of work. BCGEU's George Heyman will explain his union's strategy to defend public services.

The second part of this special report goes to the heart of the Campbell government's plans to undermine the wages and working conditions of HEU members by taking on the myth of "hotel services" in health care.

B.C.'s ruling elite argues that HEU workers in occupations ranging from laundry and housekeeping to food services and clerical work are overvalued and should be paid more in line with those working in similar sounding jobs in the hotel sector.

It's the ideological justification for the privatization of huge segments of the HEU's membership but in a just-released study, Simon Fraser professor Marjorie Cohen shows just how flimsy this justification is.

Why the next six months are important



Chris Allnutt
Secretary-Business Manager

Ready to defend Medicare

Campbell's Liberals are moving ahead with health cuts and privatization at a breakneck pace. Within months, even weeks, many of you will be engaged in efforts to protect the quality of health care you deliver – maybe even your jobs.

But we'll win because of the commitment HEU members have to public Medicare. That's what gave us our strength during the darkest days of the Socreds. That's how we strengthened public health care over the last decades.

That's how we'll stop the current bunch in Victoria from dismantling Medicare.



Fred Muzin
President

We must strengthen our coalitions

Right now, in the early days of this new government, we must build our coalitions to defend health care.

In every community in B.C., we need to reach out to other health care unions, seniors' groups, anti-poverty groups, women's groups, advocacy groups and others to form the broadest possible common front to speak out for a strong public health care system.

The time to strengthen our coalitions is now – united in our communities, we'll make Medicare stronger.



Mary LaPlante
Financial Secretary

Our union is ready

Taking on the challenge of defending public health care from privatization will require commitment from HEU members and support from our union.

The commitment is there – it always has been. So is the support.

Over the next few weeks, your union's Provincial Executive will be reviewing and approving a campaign to defend Medicare. As we plan for the year ahead, resources to support the campaign will be our top priority.

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Core services review set

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HEU wages attacked

Health services minister Hansen presents misleading inter-provincial comparison of health support workers wages. Victoria says it will end community social services successorship accord.

Fiscal update foreshadows cuts

July 30 fiscal update confirms that deep tax cuts for wealthy and corporations put province in deficit position.

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Will the government give the private sector 5,000 new long-term care beds – if so it's a promise broken to B.C.'s seniors, their families and those who provide them with direct patient care.



KATE WILLIAMS PHOTO

BY
MIKE
OLD

YOU COULD PRACTICALLY hear the sucking sound in the provincial treasury when Gordon Campbell announced huge tax cuts on June 6 – just three weeks after the election. With the stroke of a pen, the new government converted a budget surplus

into a deficit and set the stage for massive health and public service cuts and the biggest privatization putsch in B.C. history.

But it's not what British Columbians voted for when they delivered a huge majority government to Campbell on May 16. In fact, Campbell's pre-election promises were incredibly comforting – 5,000 new non-profit long-term care beds, strengthening public health care to make private clinics unnecessary, maintaining health care services where and when they're needed, tax cuts to the bottom two tax brackets only.

And the premier told HEU members in the pages of the *Guardian* that they didn't need to worry about privatization and that their work would be valued.

... AND A QUESTION

The Liberals told voters their 'private health care. That's not

But the "new era" promised by Campbell is not what's been delivered in a series of rapid-fire developments over the last five months.

This "take no prisoners" approach to public policy began with the tax cuts. Despite his election commitment to target tax cuts to the bottom two tax brackets, Campbell's government announced additional tax giveaways to the top three brackets and to corporations. In effect, 20 per cent of the value of the tax cuts have gone to one per cent of B.C. tax payers – those earning more than \$150,000 a year. The zealous premier didn't even wait for his own fiscal review panel to report back on the province's finances.

And almost no one – including, it seems, finance minister Gary Collins – is taking the B.C. Liberal's claims that the tax cuts are self-financing seriously. So Collins dropped a bomb at a recent open cabinet meeting in Penticton – health and education spending will be frozen for three years and other government ministries will be chopped by up to 50 per cent.

The implications for health care are devastating. With no allowances for population growth, inflation and other costs, health regions will be forced to cut at least \$2 billion in services over the next three years.

"In concrete terms, many communities will lose long-term care beds and community health services," says HEU secretary-

HEU members are fighting back



QUESNEL 1992

We fought smart in the early nineties and won employment security and pay equity. HEU members will need to harness that same creativity and commitment to defend health care from privatization.

HEU members are mobilizing across the province to prevent the Campbell Liberals from dismantling the health care system.

- From Kimberly to Terrace, front-line health care workers are telling the legislative standing committee on health what it will take to strengthen health care services.

- Building coalitions: in every corner of the province, HEU members are working with other unions and community groups to challenge service cuts and privatization. A B.C. Health Coalition rally held in Burnaby to oppose Pharmacare cuts attracted more than 700 people.

- HEU is blowing the lid off secret schemes to privatize hospitals and services – like the public-private partnership being hatched for the Fraser Valley.

- The union is tackling the myth that hospital support workers should be paid hotel wages by releasing a groundbreaking study. HEU members will be using the report to lobby their MLAs.

- Mobilize around the Romanow Commission.

Health coalition fights threat to Pharmacare

700 people gather in Burnaby to oppose Liberal plans to gut Pharmacare. In October Hansen delists 17 drugs and removes eye examinations from MSP for 300,000 British Columbians.

Health care spending frozen

Finance minister Collins announces devastating cuts to public services and a three-year funding freeze for health care that will put the delivery of care at risk in communities.

Collective agreements threatened

In October, labour minister Bruce threatens to rewrite labour laws to allow contracting out and privatization of health care and other public services.

Cover blown on private hospital scheme

A secret government plan for a privately owned hospital in Abbotsford is unveiled by HEU. Collins denies it.



OF COMMITMENT

new era' would not include what they say now.

business manager Chris Allnutt. "Staffing in health care facilities will be cut and care will suffer. Some communities will lose their hospital."

And the cuts have already started. The health services minister, Colin Hansen, has begun to gut the Pharmacare plan by delisting more than a dozen drugs. He's threatened more changes including means testing and higher co-payments are in the offing. He's also making more than 300,000 British Columbians cover the costs of routine eye examinations and is expected to bump many other health care procedures off the Medical Services Plan.

"This government has manufactured a revenue crunch, starved public health care of resources and cut services," says Allnutt. "It's a prelude to mass privatization."

AND PRIVATIZATION HAS ALREADY BEGUN. Identifying services that could be transferred to the private sector is one of the key responsibilities of the Campbell government's ongoing core services review. It's likely that the review — to be completed this fall — will target a variety of health care services for privatization including areas such as food services, housekeeping, stores, labs and laundry. And secret plans for a privately-financed and -owned hospital in the Fraser Valley made headlines in mid-October.



KELOWNA DAILY COURIER PHOTO

On another front, the labour minister has already indicated that he's willing to change B.C.'s labour laws to make sure contract protections like successorship and employment security don't get in the way of lucrative privatization opportunities for friends of the government. In fact, they've already announced that they'll tear up successorship provisions for community social services workers.

"Campbell's agenda to undermine Medicare and target front-line health care workers represents the greatest challenge our union has faced in decades," says Allnutt.

COMING TO A COMMUNITY NEAR YOU

The closure of the May Bennett home in Kelowna is clearly linked to the government's plans to privatize long-term care facilities in the province

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Patient lifts, training for nursing team still on Libs' health agenda

Amidst all the talk of privatization, user fees and service cuts, the Campbell government says it will follow-through on a number of measures that will strengthen health care delivery.

Regional health authorities have been funded for the first installment for direct patient care staff in long-term care facilities.

As well, Victoria has given the go ahead for the \$15 million patient lift fund designed to reduce the high injury rates for health care providers.

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"These are important health care initiatives," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "But they will soon be eclipsed by other funding decisions from government."



"It now seems to be prepared to smash its way out, shattering programs and services to B.C. families"

CONSEQUENCES

Public sector cuts looming

BY GEORGE HEYMAN
PRESIDENT
B.C. GOVERNMENT AND
SERVICE EMPLOYEES' UNION

The provincial government has acted quickly and dramatically during its first 90 days in office — putting itself in a financial box. It now seems to be prepared to smash its way out, shattering programs and services to B.C. families and foreshadowing job losses throughout the broad public sector. Cuts as deep as the government is planning are unprecedented. The total B.C. budget is just under \$25 billion. The government has promised to maintain current spending on health and education, which together are two-thirds of all expenditures. If the govern-

ment keeps that promise, it will have to cut just over \$6 billion from the remaining \$8.5 billion. The entire government payroll — BCGEU members, plus excluded managers, nurses, Professional Employees' Association members, salaried physicians and everyone else — is only \$2 billion. As union members in health care and education know, this means no public service is truly safe. That's why, over the coming months, all union members will need to stand together. Every member, elected officer and staff must work together if we are to successfully defend our jobs and the services we provide to B.C. families.

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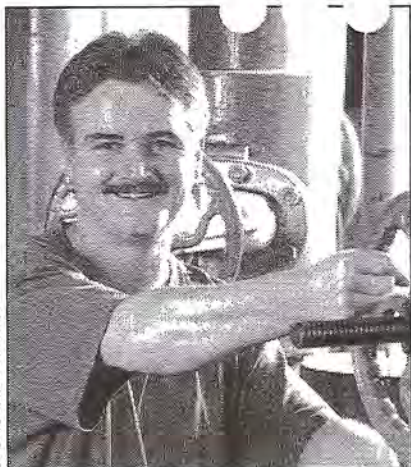
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UNSUNG HEROES



PETER BRUCE PHOTO

BRUCE MCILDOON
MACHINIST ENGINEER THIRD CLASS
ROYAL JUBILEE HOSPITAL, VICTORIA

Trades people have specialized knowledge of medical equipment and complex, changing technologies; hospital systems, processes and structures; procedures ensuring patient safety; maintaining sterile surroundings; handling of hazardous materials.



DANNY JOHNSON PHOTO

WINNIE KARPUK
LAUNDRY WORKER
PENTICTON REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Laundry workers handle linen contaminated with dangerous bodily fluids; treat heavily stained items; follow strict protocol for cleaning and folding operating room linens; assemble surgical bundles and take precautions against hazardous objects, and materials found in laundry.

A CRITICAL PART OF CARE

To prepare the ground for a privatization offensive, Victoria and its allies are mounting a full-scale attack on HEU members who don't provide direct patient care services. But a groundbreaking study by economist **Marjorie Griffin-Cohen** finds their work is closely linked to clinical services and is a crucial part of patient care in health care facilities across the province.

**BY
STEPHEN
HOWARD**

FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, Margot Roloff has worked to safeguard patients by working to create a germ-free environment at the Creston Valley Hospital. A housekeeper, Roloff, 64, follows stringent, detailed cleaning procedures to eliminate the risk of infection. Daily, she faces dangerous biological and

infectious hazards, and on-the-job injury rates that are an astounding four times higher than the B.C. average. And she helps play a direct role in the well-being and recovery of patients because she spends a minimum of 20 minutes a day interacting with them in their rooms.

But since last May's election, the valuable contributions Roloff makes to health care are being attacked by the new Liberal government and their right-wing allies who characterize her job as "hotel work." Why? Because our province's ruling elite claims that Roloff and thousands of other HEU members in occupations ranging from laundry and housekeeping to food services and clerical work are overvalued and should be paid less – in line with those working in similar sounding jobs in the hotel sector. It's the ideological justification for the privatization of huge segments of HEU's membership. But in a recent study, Simon Fraser University professor Marjorie Cohen shows just how flimsy this justification is.

"Support work is critical to the efficient running of hospitals, and in most cases, to the health of patients," says Cohen. "The distinction between 'caring work' and the work of support staff is not as clear cut as is often assumed, and the work of the 'non-technical' staff is directly related to patient care. "Particularly noteworthy is the fact that all health care support occupations require considerable health care specific knowledge, skills, and on-the-job experience and training."

The attack started taking shape six years ago, with the publication of a three page "study" by the Vancouver-based Fraser Institute. In it, the right-wing think tank claimed \$200 million in savings if "hotel services" such as hospital laundry, housekeeping and dietary were contracted out and workers paid similarly to unionized hotel employees.



Griffin-Cohen

B.C.'s corporate media gave editorial life to the study, while post-election, Premier Campbell claimed incorrectly that B.C. support workers were paid 30 per cent more than the Canadian average. As the government floated trial privatization balloons behind the scenes, *The Vancouver Sun's* editorialists urged Campbell to break HEU's contract and roll back wage rates to what it called comparable hotel pay scales.

Shoddy study shot down

Contracting-out argument based on faulty research

Six years ago the notoriously right-wing Fraser Institute in Vancouver published a three-page study purporting to be a scientific comparison of wage rates for 17 HEU classifications at Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster with what it called comparable hotel positions.

Four heroic assumptions and three unfounded extrapolations later, the Fraser Institute claimed that the government could save \$200 million – or about seven per cent of all hospital spending at the time – if HEU's "non-technical" workers were paid the same as similar workers in hotels.

But in the groundbreaking study prepared for HEU, economist Marjorie Cohen completely demolishes the right-wing think tank's findings. Cohen turned up a variety of faulty research methods, incorrect data, wrong numbers, and – most important – serious errors of omission about whether hospital and hotel work is comparable.

"The major problem with the Fraser Institute claim is that it does not examine the actual work of hospital support workers," Cohen says. "It has not examined job classifications in hospitals and compared them with hotel workers' jobs. It's merely assumed that they are the same."

ANTICIPATING THE ATTACK FROM THE RIGHT, HEU had already asked Cohen to tackle the fundamental question at hand: Do comparisons between hospital support workers and hospitality workers make sense? In taking up that challenge, Cohen conducted a detailed analysis of the Fraser Institute's report and demolishes its arguments. (See *Shoddy study*, at left) "It was a very tiny study," says Cohen, "but it generated a considerable amount of publicity, despite the fact that it's full of methodological errors. From a scholarly standpoint, it's an embarrassment."

But Cohen's most important contribution was to carry out a detailed analysis of the skills, responsibilities and experiences of workers in the jobs targeted by the Fraser Institute. Relying on extensive interviews with front-line caregivers, Cohen comes to a different conclusion than Premier Campbell. Her 40-page study validates what Roloff and HEU members already know: their work is important, and they're a critical part of care services.

For housekeepers, Cohen says a range of factors like cleanliness standards, the complexity of the physical environment, health hazards and level of patient contact make their work sub-



AGGIE CHAN
STORES CLERK
VANCOUVER HOSPITAL

Inventory stores and purchasing clerks order over 10,000 items and supplies used in a hospital environment; they are knowledgeable about medical products and act as advocates for different departments, helping them sort through bureaucracies to deliver what's needed, when it's needed.



PRIVATIZATION TARGET
Quality patient care services depend on the work of housekeepers like Margot Roloff, who helps keep Creston Valley Hospital germ-free, not just shiny and bright.

stantially different than hotel housekeepers. Antibiotic resistant organisms mean that cleaners and housekeepers must play an even more important role because they're the first line of defense against a new breed of infections among patients. Cohen notes cleanliness issues in hotels are radically different than for hospitals, citing a U.S. study that graphically portrays standards at swank hotels that would kill patients if they existed in hospitals.

In great detail she describes how laundry workers prepare surgical bundles for operating rooms – some 21 different bundles at one hospital alone. And she highlights what it's like to be part of the 'first assault' – the front end sort of dirty and hazardous laundry. Exposures to hazardous and infectious substances, high incidents of Hepatitis A, and other risks from blood borne pathogens in needle sticks and body parts and fluids that come with the dirty laundry, are all realities for laundry workers. Plumbers, electricians and other trades people are also targeted by the Fraser Institute. Here, too, Cohen points out that trades people play a critical role in patients' well-being because they maintain and operate the complex mechanical and environmental systems that bedside care depends on. They routinely deal with dangerous substances and conditions that are radically different than hotels or conventional construction sites. And she points out that trades people frequently gown-up to work around patients or in areas like ORs that must remain sterile. "The work of trades people is thought of as quite distinct

**"The work of
'non-technical'
staff is directly
related to
patient care"**

Editorial suite on the attack

HEU members are in the cross hairs of the editorial writers who articulate the agenda of B.C.'s ruling elite. Here's an excerpt from a recent Vancouver Sun editorial, which argues that health care shouldn't be exempt from the Liberal's deep spending cuts.

"With 60 per cent of the \$24-billion total budget spent on health and education, common sense dictates that both these ministries must come under the knife. To paraphrase Alberta Premier Ralph Klein, you have to hunt where the ducks are. The fattest ducks, as anyone looking at B.C.'s books can tell, are in the health and education ponds."

THE VANCOUVER SUN

A key reason for this deplorable state of affairs is the high cost of labour and the misallocation of funds in the publicly-run medicare system. Non-medical staff – purchasing clerks, laundry workers, kitchen staff and maintenance employees and the like – are paid anywhere from 25 to 63 per cent more than in comparable jobs in the private sector.

With labour costs accounting for 68 per cent of the health spending, an obvious short-term solution is to roll back those inflated wages. And, over time, Victoria will ... have to ... contract out support services to the private sector, saving a lot more money over the long haul."

from the 'caring' professions," writes Cohen, because it's assumed these workers perform their tasks behind the scenes and away from patients.

"It is surprising to hear trades people talk about their work in terms of what it means for patients."

Cohen's study also offers similar findings about dietary workers and a series of different jobs in the clerical job family like admitting clerks, receptionists, and stores and purchasing work.

THE SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR concludes that staff who perform these jobs in the health care sector are not simply duplicating the work performed in a hotel in a different setting. "Health care support workers are acutely aware of the health-related nature of their work," says Cohen. "They do not see their work to be a physical task unrelated to health care delivery.

"Patient care relies as much on the work of 'ancillary' support workers as it does on doctors, nurses and technicians." Cohen points out that for groups like the Fraser Institute, contracting out these services is a first step toward privatization of the whole system. But Cohen is clear that the benefits claimed from privatization are driven more by "ideological objectives" than they are by a close examination of the experience of hospitals in Canada or the U.S.

HEU spokesperson Chris Allnutt says he's proud of the new ground the study has broken highlighting the role of support workers, and that it would figure prominently in the union's battle to maintain decent wages and living standards for workers and to fend off the government's privatization schemes. "It confirms that the work our members do is valuable, unique and can't be contracted out," he says.

Copies of Cohen's study, "Do comparisons between hospital support workers and hospitality workers make sense?" can be obtained from HEU. Download it from <www.heu.org> or phone the communications department at 604/438-5000 and we'll mail you a copy.

How the public sees our jobs:

The public isn't buying the Fraser Institute's hotel comparisons. According to polling carried out by HEU, 98 per cent of British Columbians recognize that health care depends on many different workers, not just doctors and registered nurses. And by more than a two to one score, they know that health care facilities are different from hotels and support workers should be paid accordingly. SOURCE: HEU/MCINTYRE AND MUSTEL POLLS FEB. 2001, AND OCT. 2001.

Health care workers should be paid similarly to hotel workers:

29%

Health care workers do specialized work and should be paid accordingly:

63%

Labour

NOTEWORTHY NEWS ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE HERE AND ABROAD



IT'S AN EMERGENCY Vancouver emergency dispatchers, members of CUPE Local 873, have been without a contract since December 1999. Vancouver drivers along Hastings Street have seen their creative strike actions, billboards and cardboard ostriches representing various politicians in the Lower Mainland. In early October, an industrial inquiry commissioner was appointed to resolve the protracted dispute. He has filed his report with the labour minister, but at press time the ruling is unknown.

CUPE health workers settle

MORE THAN 20,000 CUPE health workers in Ontario are ratifying a new collective agreement that delivers eight and half per cent in wage increases over three years and strengthens vacation and benefits entitlements.

Reached just one day before the expiry of their last agreement, the new contract makes important breakthroughs on issues such as workloads, trades and registered practical nurses.

During the last round of bargaining, CUPE health workers were poised to take illegal job action to support their fight for a fair agreement. That resolve aided union bargainers in achieving a timely and fair settlement on Sept. 27.

"Despite regressive legislation and policy from the Harris government, the corporate agenda in health care and the slashing of budgets, your bargaining committee was able to conclude a deal you can all be proud of," wrote HEU president Fred Muzin to CUPE's Ontario health workers.

And 12,300 CUPE health care workers in Saskatchewan have voted 71 per cent to ratify a new collective agreement.

Steve Foley, president of the CUPE Health Care Council in Saskatchewan is pleased with the results.

"Our goal from the beginning was to achieve a fair collective agreement that addressed the membership's priority issues of workload, pensions and paid family leave. By voting to ratify this agreement our members believe we have secured our goal."

The agreement includes a representative workforce article that gives a joint employment strategy committee responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring proactive initiatives designed to ensure Aboriginal members are present in all occupations.

There is also language that promotes the use of Aboriginal elders in helping resolve workplace problems, provides for the hiring of an Aboriginal education coordinator for the health sector, and accommodates employees wishing to attend spiritual or cultural observances.

Working TV no longer on air

Shaw TV discontinues community broadcasting

On Sept. 17 Shaw TV took the community out of community television programming and terminated virtually all public access to cable Channel 4 in the Lower Mainland.



HEU has joined other community and labour groups in urging the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to enforce its own regulations and require Shaw TV to provide community programming.

The CRTC regulations evolved during the early 1970s when cable companies gained the rights to lucrative monopolies by selling distant signals of mostly American programming to cable subscribers. The CRTC held the view, codified in 1991, that there needed to be a return to the community through a dedicated channel to "ensure that members of the communities they served had access to the broadcasting system."

"Even before this out-and-out cutting of programming," says secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt, "the CRTC was receiving complaints about a reduction in access. Now with this, the community has no independent access at all. Zero."

Shaw TV has replaced independent community programs like *Working TV* with their own tightly controlled "infotainment" programs which play over and over all day long. They only deal with non-controversial issues, in short "dumbed-down" three minute segments. Controversial issues like Pharmacare cuts or trade agreements are ignored or are treated very superficially when mentioned at all.

In contrast, the terminated shows all provided unique perspectives and met with the CRTC's objectives of providing an uncensored voice for community expression, innovation and alternative viewpoints. They provided a valuable public resource and educational forum that is gone from Channel 4.

Julius Fisher, Vancouver producer of *Working TV* — the only regular television show reflecting local workers' lives and problems — says, "This is a free speech issue. TV ignores labour except in news programming, and then it's only about strikes or disruptions."

Now, he says, labour's only voice on television will be silenced. "Why? So Shaw can make money advertising, and this directly contradicts what the community channel was intended for."

Liberals eliminate labour's voice at WCB

The Hospital Employees' Union says workers have lost their voice at the Workers' Compensation Board after the Liberals' replacement of the entire WCB panel of administrators with their business allies in late September.

Labour minister Graham Bruce, riding a wave of widespread resentment against the WCB, replaced the panel with a lawyer who represents some of the most powerful business interests in the province plus two accountants. Lawyer Alan Winter will review WCB's workplace safety standards, funding for injured workers, rehabilitation and survivor benefits.

In one fell swoop the Liberals have eliminated any worker voice at WCB. But the Liberals' business

friends will have their interests protected by Winter, a lawyer for the Business Council of B.C., the Coalition of B.C. Business and the Employers' Forum.

"These new trustees are certainly going to push their own agenda," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "And that agenda will include reduced health and safety protection for workers and significantly decreased benefits for injured workers. And we fear they'll make it even more difficult to qualify for a claim."

Allnutt says that dissatisfaction with the board is legitimate, but the government is using that as a cover to cut benefits and, he suspects, regulations.

"We think they are going to drastically loosen up

regulations now in place to protect workers from injury and illness on-the-job," he says. "We are hearing that injury on duty will be capped at 90 per cent of net pay. This will undercut the 75 per cent of gross pay HEU members fought so hard to maintain in their contract during the last round of collective bargaining."

Allnutt says this would, in effect, be a 10 per cent reduction in WCB payments for workers who are injured while performing their jobs.

"Instead of finding a way to make workplaces safer for all British Columbians, the Liberal government has just given carte blanche to industry to continue to injure workers," says Allnutt.

Colombians, Canadians forge links

LATE LAST SUMMER 30 Canadians journeyed to Colombia to learn first-hand how the people of that country are struggling against the terrible repression and violence in their country. And about how progressive Canadians can help them in their fight for peace and justice.

The delegation of trade unionists, human rights activists, academics, NDP elected officials, aboriginal leaders, representatives of non-governmental organizations and peace activists spent two weeks meeting with their Colombian counterparts.

Rhonda Spence of CUPE's B.C. division and Guy Pocklington of the National Union of Public and General Employees are two of the trade unionists who made the trip.

They spent their first full day in Colombia in Barrancabermeja, where two women's organizations were hosting an anti-war conference.

"The women of the Popular Women's Organization and the Road to Peace were very courageous to hold the conference in Barrancabermeja," says Spence, who is also president of the union-linked development agency CoDevelopment Canada. "It's heavily controlled by right-wing paramilitary forces – the main perpetrator of violence and death in Colombia."

The next day, the Canadians split into five groups.

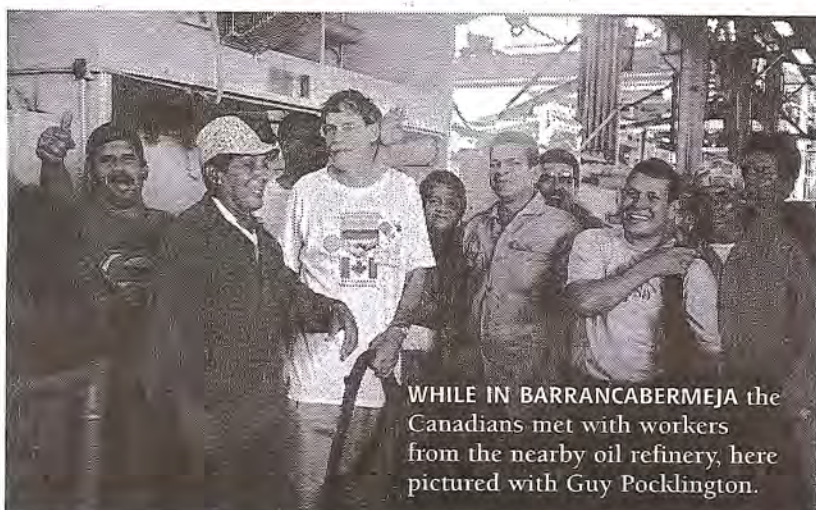
Spence's group visited the cities of Cali in the interior, the port of Buenaventura on the Pacific coast and some Afro-Colombian communities along Colombia's extensive river system. The latter are threatened by huge megaprojects like hydroelectric dams. "That would destroy the habitat where they have lived, hunted and farmed for hundreds of years," says Spence.

Although they have legal title to their lands, if powerful interests want them out, they just send in the paramilitaries. But Proceso de Comunidades Negras (Black Community Process) is organizing and resisting.

In Cali the municipal workers recent-

ly won an important campaign against the privatization of their water. Although successful, the fight was violent and the violence continues sporadically.

Buenaventura has just been designated as a free trade zone, which means



WHILE IN BARRANCABERMEJA the Canadians met with workers from the nearby oil refinery, here pictured with Guy Pocklington.

that powerful interests will start to build up the port infrastructure to handle massive exports, and the people living there are in danger of being displaced.

Colombian union leaders live in constant danger. Pocklington ran into evidence of recent violence against labour leaders in Bogotá and Tocaima.

"The most significant thing I learned was that the violence in Colombia has little to do with military objectives," he says. "The famous Plan Colombia, sold as a war against drugs, is a really a war against unarmed peasants, workers, leaders of trade unions and popular social movements."

Peasants are moved off their land to give access of the country's vast resources to transnational corporations; resources like oil, minerals, hydroelectric power and the botanical riches of Colombia's forests, says Pocklington.

The displacements result in grinding poverty in the cities.

"There are 1.5 million displaced living in Bogotá alone, many in appalling conditions in shanty towns. Almost half of them are Afro-Colombian or indigenous."

The groups reassembled before their trip back to Canada. They sought

IN THE MOUNTAINS outside Tocaima, a small agricultural cooperative produces sugar bricks, called panelas.



GUY POCKLINGTON PHOTOS

assurances from the president of the Senate and the ombudsman for human rights that the Colombians who participated in this international exchange would not be in danger after they left. The hosts and their visitors formulated some concrete suggestions for the Canadians to take home.

"We can – through our unions and other organizations – pressure Canadian companies who benefit from Plan Colombia," says Spence.

Pocklington says one of the major problems is the impunity with which the paramilitaries operate. "That must be challenged, because if it isn't, it will never stop."

The Colombians and Canadians discussed ways to set up

temporary refuges and secure access to food when communities are threatened or if they are attacked.

Canadians can lend their expertise and resources in education, research and training in human rights.

"And we have so much to learn from them," says Spence.

"The efforts of Colombian unionists, women, Afro-Colombians, indigenous people and peasants to build their movements and to push for peace is to be admired and respected. Their commitment under such dangerous conditions was a very humbling experience for me and I am sure for the rest of the delegation."



CUPE B.C.'S Rhonda Spence (left) and CUPW's Ruth Larsen from Labrador (right) visited the oil refinery where these two Colombian women work.



ANGELA SCHIRA, BCFL (left), Collette Vadeboncoeur BCTS, Fred Muzin HEU, Chris Allnutt HEU, Mary LaPlante HEU, Jim Sinclair BCFL, and Margaret Benson BCTS sign up to give life.

Give life a chance

The B.C. Federation of Labour has teamed up with the B.C. Transplant Society in a comprehensive campaign to urge union members to register as organ donors, in a drive to reduce the length of time the more than 469 British Columbians must wait for transplants.

HEU jumped on board immediately and is distributing special promotional materials (see insert) and will have organ donor registration forms available to locals shortly.

"This new partnership with the BCFL [and its affiliates] is the largest single institutional commitment ever made to the B.C. organ donor program," said B.C. Transplant Society CEO Bill Barrable.

"We've decided to take the organizational resources we use to negotiate for our members and mobilize them to help the hundreds of British Columbians whose lives could be extended with an organ transplant," said B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair.

You can get more information about the organ donor program, and register on-line, through the BCFL web site, <www.bcfed.com> – just click on the Give Life sign. Read the stories of those whose lives have been saved or changed because someone donated an organ they needed. Or watch for the posters and registration forms at your workplace; ask your local executive if you don't see them soon.

November 11
Remembrance Day,
HEU offices closed.

November 14/15
OH&S Conference,
Vancouver.

November 16
Social policy under Mike Harris:
Lessons for B.C.,
Canadian Centre for Policy
Alternatives,
Vancouver Public Library,
Alma Van Dusen Room,
2:30-5:30 pm.

November 18-23
CUPE National Convention,
Vancouver Trade & Convention
Centre.

November 23-25
NDP National Convention,
Winnipeg.

November 26-28
B.C. Federation of Labour
Convention,
Vancouver Trade and Convention
Centre.

WORKING TV

Shaw Cable discontinued all
its community programming on
Sept. 17, 2001. (See page 12)

That includes Working TV, but
we're still on the web across B.C.
and all of North America. Check
out the new high quality web-
casts by our new
Broadband server at
<www.workingtv.com>.

And stay tuned!



Youth can learn labour's past

HISTORY IS a fascinating subject in the hands of good teachers. They make it interesting to read about kings and queens and powerful religious leaders, but unless you really dig for information, you'd think ordinary folk didn't even exist in times past.

Without writers like Charles Dickens and Emile Zola describing the lives of workers and people living on the margins of their societies, we would have no idea of how those people lived and worked.

Of course, there are many other resources available if you just look for them, but sometimes you really have to dig.

Thanks to the British Columbia Teachers' Federation and the B.C. Federation of Labour, teachers in this province now have an excellent tool to help them teach teens in their classrooms about the history of working people.

BCIF and the B.C. Fed know that today's children will grow up to become the workers, professionals and leaders in their society.

Whatever their future role will be on the labour stage, it is important that they know the history of the labour movement. That is why these two organizations have collaborated on a new guide to labour studies for use in secondary schools. It took a group of working teachers two years to develop the 332-page *Youth, Unions and YOU*.

"Our kids need more opportunities to think and learn about the world of work," said BCTF first vice-president Neil Worboys when the guide was officially released in late August. "They should be learn-

ing about their rights in the workplace, why unions have been organized and how people around the world are responding to the global economy."

"The history of working people has been filled with drama, sacrifices and successes. No history or understanding of our province can be complete without stories of how working people improved their lives," says B.C. Fed president Jim Sinclair. "This guide gives students, parents and teachers more choices to help our kids learn about the economy, the world of work and their rights within it."

The history lesson is by no means confined to British Columbia, either.

Students learn about the nature of work in a castle in Europe as well as modern logging camps in this province. They learn the mechanics of a job description by dissecting the work of a fish-monger in a medieval village. Students look at child labour — which unfortunately is still

with us today in many parts of the world. They look at why this existed, why it still does and what they can do about it.

Women have always worked, but for a long time their work was invisible, it didn't count. How women fought to have their contributions to society recognized is part of the story. So is how they are still fighting discrimination and how young women (and men) now in school will most likely need to continue with this struggle. Even women's involvement in the union

'The history of working people has been filled with drama, sacrifices and successes'



The cover of *Youth, Unions and YOU* is from a 1947 Fraser Wilson watercolour, the artist's view of the Vancouver waterfront of the time. The painting is the artist's proof for a mural now prominently on display at the Maritime Labour Centre.

movement was not immune from this syndrome, students learn.

The use of this guide is not a mandatory part of the province's curriculum but BCTF and the B.C. Federation of Labour urge parents to encourage their school boards and their children's teachers to make use of the material.

"It's very exciting," says Sinclair, "to see the potential for our kids to learn how events in their own community's history — coal mining in Nanaimo, for example — hold lessons about labour rights in the world today."

The guide is available to anyone with access to the Internet. The BCTF has posted it on their web site at <www.bctf.ca/LessonAids/online/la2039>.

While it is designed for teachers and secondary school students, because there are numerous links to other sites, it is an excellent resource to anyone interested in the history of working people.

Coffee break



All stories guaranteed factual.
Sources this issue: CALM, the
Internet, and B.C. Vital Statistics

Cartoon figures of the world, unite

At Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, the 1,200 Teamsters Local 385 members who portray Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and other famous cartoon characters won an "undercover" victory in recent contract negotiations.

The union members who don the heavy outfits and entertain park guests must wear tights or bike shorts beneath their costumes. They've long shared these undergarments, which management said were washed in hot water after each wearing.

Still, some members weren't comfortable leaving the cleaning to the company.

"They'd rather do it themselves, even if it means a slightly bigger laundry load," says Donna-Lynne Dalton, Local 385 business agent.

Dalton is pleased that among contract improvements for the



performers, Disney has agreed to assign Pluto, Minnie Mouse and the rest of the gang their own bike shorts and tights that they may wash themselves.

Working less hours works

An official report assessing France's experiment with a 35-hour work week notes that the weekend now starts on Thursday or ends on Tuesday.

Since 1997, unemployment in France has dropped four per cent, of which one per cent is attributed to the new policy,

The shorter work week has created 285,000 jobs.

Two-thirds of workers affected by the policy say it has improved their lives, and working women report that it has made their lives more tolerable. Anecdotal evidence suggests that French men are buying the groceries and ironing more as a result.

Bumper stickers

- Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
- Give me ambiguity or give me something else.
- We are born naked, wet

and hungry. Then things get worse.

- Make it idiot proof and someone will make a better idiot.
- Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else.
- Very funny, Scotty. Now beam down my clothes.
- Why is 'abbreviation' such long word?

On a typical British Columbia day in 2000

One hundred and eleven babies were born:

- fifty-seven males and 54 females were born
- fifty-three live births involved maternal complication
- thirty-eight babies had perinatal complications
- twenty-six were caesarean deliveries
- eight were pre-term
- six were low birth babies
- five were born to teenage mothers

HEU people

Controller likes the West

Robert Shapiro started working at HEU as the new controller in early August.

Originally from Montreal, he says he has slowly been working his way west for the last 20 years or so. His last stop before British Columbia was Manitoba. During his three years in that province he became a chartered accountant.

He brings a wealth of experience in the private sector to his new job, but he says he always was interested in working for a not-for-profit organization, and HEU fits the bill.

"I can use my skills in budgetary control to serve the members and staff of HEU," says Shapiro.

He was the chief financial officer of Polaris Water Company before joining HEU's staff. He has a family with two boys, one at UBC and the younger son is a promising snowboarder.

IN MEMORIAM

Ex-staffer dies after long life

Brother Owen Adams died in Kelowna on Sept. 18 at the age of 81, and the news triggered fond memories of the outdoor-loving, HEU servicing representative and director in both union members and staff alike.

Adams, who worked in the Lower Mainland, the North and the former Okanagan/Kootenay region, retired in the 1980s. In his obituary, his family graciously acknowledged the members he

worked for so tirelessly with "special thanks to the health care professionals on 4A at KGH."

He is survived by a loving family that includes nine grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

PG Care Aide sorely missed

Sister Roberta Bilinski, a long-time Care Aide at Simon Fraser Lodge in Prince George, passed away in early August of this year.

She was well beloved by her union brothers and sisters. The residents at the facility appreciated her kindness, wit and humour.

Co-worker Wayne Pollard, also a Care Aide at Simon Fraser, wrote her obituary in the *Prince George Citizen*.

"Special thanks, Roberta, for all the years of enjoying your humorous, joyous character. Many that worked with you remember looking over their shoulder to see what tricks or jokes you were often up to. You do realize that you will have to send down a letter from the person in charge up there to verify your indefinite leave of absence from work. It will most likely result in a grievance and end up going to arbitration. Any other time we'd say we stand beside you, but this time we send our love."

She has left a great emptiness, he says.

HEU notes passing of ally

Disability advocate and social justice activist Mary Williams died unexpectedly on Oct. 5 at her home in Vancouver.

Over 25 years ago, while institutionalized after her spinal cord injury, Mary and a few other residents began planning a disability advocacy organization. This marked the beginning of her long and devoted career as a spokesperson and mentor for people with disabilities.

Mary was a feminist and founding member of the DisAbled Women's Network Canada, and the immediate past president of the B.C. Coalition of People with Disabilities. She brought a combination of toughness, gentleness and a great sense

of humour to her work, speaking out on issues from women's rights, to accessible transportation, to rehabilitation, to AIDS as a disability.

Mary received a Coast Foundation Courage to Come Back award earlier this year because of her remarkable contributions.

Mary was key to the success of the 1999 campaign to save the G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre from closure. HEU was part of that campaign and benefited greatly from her knowledge and experience.

"There is life after disability. I'm not my spinal cord injury and I'm not my wheelchair. I'm still Mary. I have a great quality of life; not just a good one, but a great one." — Mary, April 2001.



SHAPIRO



WILLIAMS

EQUITY PHONE LINE

1.800.663.5813, ext. 514
Lower Mainland 739.1514

press 1

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 2

Ethnic Diversity

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



press 4

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 discrimina-



press 3

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 call to the
equity phone lines
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:

- Burnaby 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
1-800-347-0290
- Courtenay site
1-800-624-9940

KOOTENAY OFFICE:

- Nelson
1-800-437-9877



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CAROL SIMPSON/CALM GRAPHIC

"Henderson, you're already doing the jobs of three people ... how can you possibly have time to join a union?"



- twenty-one were born to mothers over 35
- three were multiple births
- eight still births occurred every 10 days

Seventy-five people died:

- thirty-nine males and 36 females died
- twenty-six deaths were due to circulatory disease
- twenty-one deaths were from cancer
- fifteen deaths were attribut-

able to smoking

- seven deaths were due to respiratory disease
- four deaths resulted from accidents and violence
- five deaths were alcohol-related, one directly and four indirectly due to alcohol
- one death was drug-induced
- two deaths were from diabetes
- one death was due to

Alzheimer's disease or other senile dementias

- three deaths every 10 days were from HIV
- four infants died every 10 days

Sixty couples were married:

- thirty-four were civil ceremonies and 26 were performed by religious representatives
- thirty-six marriages were couples where both parties were marrying for the first time
- two teenage couples married every 10 days

Words of wisdom?

- One nice thing about ego-tists: They don't talk about other people.
- The older you get, the better you realize you were.
- Do pediatricians play miniature golf on Wednesdays?
- If you try to fail, and succeed, which have you done?
- Did you ever wonder what cured ham has been cured of?



Don't close your eyes
to sweatshop abuses

Exploitation is never in fashion

Long hours, low wages, harsh conditions. People in countries like Nicaragua, Indonesia and Mexico often pay the real price for the clothes we like to wear. It's time retailers and manufacturers end sweatshop abuses. We can make it happen. To find out more about the NO SWEAT Campaign call 1-800-466-3326 or visit www.oxfam.ca

NO SWEAT is a joint campaign of the Canadian Labour Congress, the Maquila Solidarity Network, Students Against Sweatshops - Canada, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, and Oxfam Canada. Visit www.maquilasolidarity.org

Oxfam thanks the Canadian International Development Agency for their support.



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Plumbing pioneer

The first woman to ply the plumber's trade in B.C. is HEU member Brenda Jordison's mother.

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All in the family

Richmond LPN and local chair can help his son cope with Tourette Syndrome, because he has it too.



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Shaw thumbs nose at community

Working TV and other community programs have been booked off the air leaving no labour voice on the television airwaves.

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The drama of workers' history

Kids are going to learn about the history of labour thanks to a new teaching guide.



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