Demonstration Staged At Parliament Buildings

HEU brought the Windsor care dispute to the B.C. Parliament by staging a demonstration at the Parliament Buildings in Victoria May 8. Windsor HEU members are now into the third month of strike in their contract dispute with Trizec Corporation.

Winndermere Talks Proposed

At Guardian press time contract talks between HEU and Windsor Central Park Lodge were proposed to resume in June.

The proposal to resume talks came after HEU accepted the urging of the B.C. Labour Relations Board to return to the bargaining table once Windsor was made fully aware of the level of funding available from the Ministry of Health to pay the standard of wages and benefits demanded by HEU.

Evidence of the available funding was brought out in testimony given by Associate Deputy Minister Isabel Kelly at LRDB hearings in April and May.

At B.C. long term care facilities

HEU Study Details Health Care Problems

Many of the 21,000 elderly citizens in B.C. health care facilities are not receiving proper care, due in part to a shortage of staff, according to a 134-page HEU study released in May.

The HEU long-term care brief, the result of a nine-month Union study involving over 1,500 workers in 79 facilities, found four primary and seven secondary problems that seriably limit quality of long term care in B.C.

The primary problems cited were:

- inadequate fire safety measures;
- too few staff available to provide human as well as physical needs of residents;
- coverage lapses in the regulation that are often loosely enforced;
- substandard care in profit making facilities;
- no security of tenure of resident at profit facilities due to threat of eviction when more lucrative business ventures arise;
- insufficient regulations to protect prevent private owners from skimping on supplies;
- no assurance that taxpayers money provided to the private owner will be used to provide better resident care.

Other problems cited were:

- lack of orientation and in service training for nursing staff;
- scarcity of special facilities for psycho-gastrocnic reasons;
- coreless drug use;
- insufficient efforts to inform residents of their personal financial resources;
- limited dietary choices and rushed meals;
- shortages of supplies;
- inaccurate infection control.

The study added that HEU regards more stringent fire safety measures as a top priority for protecting elderly lives.

The study found that less than 22 percent of the care facilities examined hold the regular monthly drills called for by government regulations.

HEU members in only a few facilities indicated that their facility deserved a good or excellent fire safety rating.

The Union's recommendations, outlined in the brief, include:

- adoption and implementation of the new fire safety guidelines that have been written by the Fire Commissioner's Office (the brief noted that guidelines are not good enough, however, since certain guidelines already in effect are being ignored);
- installation of smoke detectors and sprinklers in all care facilities;
- provision of fire safety education for all new staff during their first day's orientation training;
- setting fixed government staffing requirements for every care facility, with regulations that recognize the need for increased staff to provide levels of care that are required by today's residents;
- an overhaul of all regulations, guidelines and standards;
- the clawing up of one set of regulations so that the quality of care is uniform throughout the provincial care health facilities;
- the launching of an aggressive government program of purchase and, if necessary, expropriation of all profit facilities;
- conversion, where geographically possible, of all profit making care facilities into non-profit satellites of acute hospitals so that operating costs can be reduced by shared professional staffing and joint purchasing.

A copy of the HEU study is being sent to each Unit. Extra available copies of the report may be obtained upon request from the Provincial Office.

B.C. HEU has requested a meeting with Health Minister Jim Nielsen to discuss the study and its recommendations, according to Union Secretary Business Manager Jack Gerow.

"We would certainly like to meet with the minister as soon as possible to discuss the report. The recommendations we've suggested will not only add to the quality of life of workers but bring the livability standards at health care facilities up to a decent level."

$20,000 Contributed From 55 HEU Units

Fifty-five HEU Units have now responded with financial support for Windsor care dispute members presently on strike against the Trizec Corp.

During May an additional 32 Units sent donations to supplement donations sent from other Units in April.

These recent Unit contributions are:

- Bermuda, $225
- Powell River, $200
- Sechelt, $200
- White Rock, $1,000
- Richmond, $400
- St. Vincent's $500
- G. F. Strong, $200
- Shaughnessy, $2,000
- Holy Family, $200
- Florence Nightingale, $100
- Inglewood, $200
- Edith Cavel, $200
- New Vista, $300
- King George, $141
- Chilliwack, $500
- Penticton, $100
- Grand Forks, $200
- Kimberley Special $50
- Poucou Coupe, $50
- 100 Mile House, $200

Burts Lake, $250
Forest Nelson, $500
Noric House, $75
Overlander, $250
Pondorosa, $200
Salmon Arm, $50
Gorge Road, $150
Prior, $100
Cumbria, $300
Campbell River, $300
Quentin, $100
Mount St. Mary, $200
Victoria General, $1,000
Vancouver General donates an additional $2,000, recently after initially contribut-
ing $3,000.

The total of HEU Unit contributions is now over $20,000.

July/August Guardian

There will be one edition of The Guardian for the months of July and August. The 'summer' Guardian will be sent to HEU Units in August.

These members of the Cranbrook Unit gathered for this photo during a Unit meeting May 7 with their staff representative. Included in the photo in the front row are Chairperson Josie Cavie, Secretary-Treasurer Barb Hunt and Provincial Executive Kootenay Regional Vice-President Margaret McMahon. Marion Perry photo
Comment On HEU Study

(Editor's Note: The following opinion appeared on The Vancouver Sun's editorial page May 25th.)

What the Hospital Employees Union has to say about the operators of private hospitals in the province and the way the elderly and chronically ill are treated in those profit-oriented hospitals will undoubtedly concern a lot of people.

But the statement by the director of the health ministry's long-term and home-care program that "we couldn't manage without them" should concern them even more.

It means that for the foreseeable future the provincial government is committed to living with both the best and the worst of private hospitals and reduced to negotiating deals that in the final analysis have as much, and possibly more, to do with the well-being of the owners than with the well-being of the citizens in their care.

According to the health ministry's Phillip Scott, the government has no intention of either buying or expropriating any of the private long-term care hospitals that 3,100 union members so roundly and generally condemn in the HEU study released this week.

The union, we have no doubt, was under no illusion that the government would give up that easily but, convinced that things would be a whole lot better if the profit motive were removed from long-term health care, the government had to be made.

Ideally, the union is right. And we have no doubt that privately the government agrees that it is right, but to admit it publicly ... that would require an admission that there are not now, and have never been, enough tax dollars to spare for the government to take care of all those who are no longer capable of caring for themselves.

Since we're not likely to get that, and if the government has been forced to accept a relationship with owners of private hospitals, it is imperative that the government not compound its original errors by ignoring everything the employee has to say about the way things are being run.

The health ministry — which even now, we are told, is conducting its own study into the quality of care and is developing a comprehensive report on standards — would do well to take into account the complaints of all 1,300 employees in 79 long-term care hospitals who contributed to the HEU study.

And it should act expeditiously on those as it plans to do in trying to eliminate inequities in the current flat-fee rate structure, which, it admits, allows some operators to make excessive profits while others are penalized by higher costs.

Saving Money

There is little doubt that the provincial Ministry of Health has a financial interest in the strike at Windmere Central Park Lodge.

From the ministry's point of view, the longer the strike the greater the chance HEU's standard of wages and benefits will be broken.

If the health ministry, which provides standard per diem subsidies for facilities like Windmere, can aid and abet the breaking of our standard agreement, then they'll be saving themselves some money now and in future collective agreements.

Long-term care facilities like Windmere are run for profit and the Minister of Health still has a goal to curtail costs. The lower the wages paid by private operators, the less money the government has to fork out in future subsidies.

We know that if the ministry was genuinely interested in ending the dispute, it could instruct Windmere to pull from its subsidies enough money to pay employees the same wages and benefits that are already in effect at other subsidized health care facilities around the province.

Windmere is getting exactly the same amount of money as others around the province and as a result of paying low wages it is ring uping excessive profits and exporting them back to Ontario where Trizec, the owners of Windmere, are located.

It should be clearly understood that it is B.C. taxpayers who are subsidizing Windmere's profits in this province through funds provided by the Ministry of Health.

We wonder how those taxpayers who are looking for jobs are going to react at the ballot-box come the next provincial election when they learn that the Minister of Health has been an accomplice to the exporting of excessive profits and valuable jobs to Ontario strikebreakers. Is this his way of attempting to alleviate the number of unemployed in B.C.?

Trizec made $16 million last year. We don't think it's too much to ask them that if they are going to make money in B.C. that they pay B.C. workers prevailing wages and benefits.

This provincial government has repeatedly proclaimed that "B.C. is not for sale." Why then is the Ministry of Health selling B.C. taxpayers short by paying subsidies to an Ontario company to operate in B.C. at excessive levels of profit and then subsequently sit back and watch B.C. employees receive substandard wages and benefits when the Ministry has made provision for the B.C. standard?

It's clear to us that the government has sold out for the calculated purpose of breaking the standards it already recognizes and pays for.

The Hospital Guardian, June 1991/Page 3
To prove Windermere is a hospital

HEU is going to the B.C. Supreme Court June 25 in an attempt to legally prove that Windermere Central Park Lodge is a hospital and thereby covered by the province’s Essential Services Disputes Act legislation.

The B.C. Labour Relations Board in May rejected the Union’s appeal for reconsideration of an earlier LRB decision that Windermere is not covered by ESA.

“We’re not about to give up now after coming this far,” said Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow.

Howard, farther along in his written decision, Munroe said: “Speaking in the context of this case, where the essential character of a facility is that of a hospital under any of the three definitions under the Hospital Act, and where it is licensed as such, panels of the Board should be inclined to find that it is a hospital under the ESA as well.”

Gerow said the ruling means that if HEU is successful in the court case, the B.C. Supreme Court that Windermere is a hospital under the Hospital Act, then the LRB should rule that ESA legislation applies to Windermere.

“If the LRB were to rule in the appeal that the services provided by HEU members at Windermere fell under ESA because that facility was a ‘hospital’, HEU would immediately elect to settle the dispute by arbitration and would cease all strike activity.”

One of the Union’s position from the outset has been to have the Windermere dispute settled by arbitration.

Union Committee Assisted With Study

HEU members on the Union’s Long Term Care Committee assisted in the preparation of the long term care study released May 19 by HEU.

The members were: Phil MacLeod, Queens Park Unit; Carol Sanders, Kiwanis Unit; Fe Datin, Edith Cavell Unit; Barb Roberts, Como Lake Unit; Ellen Shrey, Dogwood Lodge Unit; Mela Poyer, Normandy Unit.

Barb Roberts told The Guardian it was a “real honour” to be selected on the committee.

“We’ve wanted this study for a long time. It’s something which everybody who works in a long term care facility, especially at a profit-making one, already knows about,” said Roberts.

“We’ve met as a committee just about every Wednesday for a year now and have gotten deeper and deeper into the study. There was just so much information that we kept uncovering.”

“The study puts my mind at ease a bit now since the conditions that we’ve personally witnessed over the years are now documented for everybody in the health care field to read. I just hope the government listens to our recommendations.”

Government Defends Profit Hospitals

The use of profit-making hospitals for the care of the chronically ill and the elderly was defended by the provincial government following the release of the HEU study.

Separate Wage Policy Conference

The HEU Constitution and By-Laws provide for a separate wage policy conference for Units not involved in the HEU/HLRA Master Agreement provinces-wide bargaining.

Units called to a separate wage policy conference shall not be called to the Provincial Wage Policy Conference, according to Article XII of the Union’s Constitution and By-Laws.

The date for a separate wage policy conference for Units not covered by the Master Agreement will be announced at a later date.

“It’s very badly needed for hospitals run by private operators,” said Philip Scott, director of the government’s Ministry of Health’s long-term care and home care program. “We couldn’t manage without them.”

Scott told the Vancouver Sun that the provincial government had no intention of phasing out private hospitals, but added that provincial negotiators are hammering out a new financing formula with private operators aimed at redistributing ministry money more equitably.

Jack Gerow, Union Secretary-Business Manager, said Scott’s defence of the ministry is “not based on any reasoning at all sound reasoning. As long as there is a profit motive in the delivery of health care, the quality of health care will run a poor second to quantity of profit in terms of priorities.”

At Guardian press time, Health Minister Jim Nielsen had commented on the HEU report.

Altamont Contract Negotiations

HEU has returned to the bargaining table in its contract dispute with the West Vancouver Hospital in West Vancouver.

“As a rule, it is certainly preferable to have a contract negotiated directly to the parties concerned rather than seeing it go to arbitration,” said Union Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow.

The contract negotiations with the West Vancouver health care facility are in an attempt to review a previous collective agreement which had been scheduled for arbitration.

Lauren Balotti Steps Down

Sister Balotti was presented with a crystal vase and a corsage at the luncheon.

Laura was elected Vice-Chairperson when the Unit was first certified in 1966 and was elected Chairperson three years before taking her sash, held elected office from the first day of Unit certification 15 years ago until stepping down from her Chairperson’s position in January.

The April 28 LRB decision stated: “In our view, if the evidence which we have heard was heard by the head of the original panel, the result would or should have been that the picketing of about that was permissible initially, would continue to be permissible for one further week.”

As a result of the decision, HEU was allowed to picket about April 29 to May 5.

The decision stated: In part, “There may be instances, therein, where the ally, in order to prove its regained neutrality, will have to demonstrate not only its willingness to avoid a pattern of conduct but also that the allied assistance is no longer a major factor in the laboured dispute; or at least upon a balancing of all considerations, of the degree of harm by continued picketing outweighs the degree of benefit still being experienced by the struck employer.”

In The Dark Of Night, A $13,000 Grocery Bill

The scene was like one out of the old “Unforgettable” TV series and, in true case of the role of “bad guy” Frank Nitti who played on Ian Brady of Windermere Central Park Lodge.

In the dark of night, About Food Distributors was told by Brady to bring to the 13,344.11 worth of groceries in a truck to a residence on West 4th Avenue in Vancouver, where Brady was to be met with a rented truck to pick the groceries up.

That all happened at midnight on the evening of April 11 as it was told no one was familiar with a Labour Relations Board panel. The $13,344.11 worth of groceries were destined for Windermere Central Park Lodge, where HEU members have been on strike since April 4.

HEU won the application before the LRB for reconsideration regarding picketing at About Food.

The April 28 LRB decision stated: "In our view, if the evidence which we have heard was heard by the head of the original panel, the result would or should have been that the picketing of about that was permissible initially, would continue to be permissible for one further week.”

As a result of the decision, HEU was allowed to picket from April 29 to May 5.

The decision stated: In part, “There may be instances, therein, where the ally, in order to prove its regained neutrality, will have to demonstrate not only its willingness to avoid a pattern of conduct but also that the allied assistance is no longer a major factor in the laboured dispute; or at least upon a balancing of all considerations, of the degree of harm by continued picketing outweighs the degree of benefit still being experienced by the struck employer.”

Most of the store’s customers were taken by surprise.

A surprise luncheon was held recently by Sunny Hill Unit members in honour of Laura Balotti in Vancouver. Laura, shown holding her sash, was elected Chairperson three years before stepping down from office from the first day of Unit certification 15 years ago until stepping down from her Chairperson’s position in January.

The Hospital Guardian, June 18/1 Page 8

Provincial Executive Northern Regional Vice-President Andy Korynski and Windermere Unit member Joesa Hermane formed a picket line at About Food Distributors in May.
High risk of work stoppage

Equal Pay Struggle At Hospitals

B.C. hospitals have been targeted as the next major battleground in the trade union fight for equal pay for work of equal value, according to HEU Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow.

"The risk of a work stoppage is very high, both because of the nature of our goal and the pent-up feeling that we have waited too long already," said Gerow.

Although the Union’s master agreement with all 110 public hospitals does not expire until the end of the year, Gerow said the union has started its campaign early in order to ensure that all members, especially the 20 per cent who are male, understand the implications.

"I anticipate that equal pay for work of equal value will be our first priority at the bargaining table. This time, the hospitals will not be able to escape it."

The HEU demand, as proposed by the Provincial Executive, is similar to what municipal unions were seeking during the recent municipal strike — equal base rates for male and predominantly female jobs.

This would mean bringing all HEU classifications up to the level of hospital cleaners, whose $1,500 (August 1, 1981) rates is as much as $400 a month ahead of the lowest-paid clerical jobs.

Gerow said that equalizing Union members’ pay is a matter of "fairness and justice" in winning the difficult philosophical concept of equal pay for work of equal value.

"But it’s quick and just as effective as any kind of job evaluation technique, which is really just an employer’s tool to bring down wages," he said.

"The answer is to bring women’s rates up substantially and then apply a general wage increase. We can only do that through collective bargaining, not through job evaluation."

Gerow said the municipal strike, although the unions did not achieve their equal pay demands, was helpful in creating both public and membership awareness of the issue.

"Employers should be getting the message that if there’s anything that will characterize collective bargaining in the early 1980’s is the drive for equal pay for work of equal value," he said.

Unlike previous negotiations, Gerow said the Union this time intends to reject binding arbitration under the Essential Services Disputes Act if an impasse develops and resort instead to job action against hospitals.

"ESDA arbitrators have to follow an averaging process, so we could only get something as good as the average settlement around," he said. "We’re not going to get equal pay that way."

Local HEU units currently are studying the proposed demands, which include, in addition to equal pay, a one-year wage increase of $2.50 an hour. The Union’s contract proposals will be finalized at a wage policy conference in October.

HLRA President Peter McAlister’s comment on equal pay, as reported in the Vancouver media, was that the way to achieve equality in wage rates at B.C. hospitals is through job classification and not confinement. He said in May that HEU seemed willing to ignore a joint union-management attempt to develop a fair rating system for hospital work.

Gerow said he was "at a loss to understand McAlister’s reasoning."

"The current classification exercise is based primarily on the premise of comparability with provincial government, health care workers. I have not seen anywhere that the Peck Tribunal has the jurisdiction to establish equal pay for work of equal value. If that’s a new HLRA proposal, we will certainly give it every consideration," said Gerow.

Student Proposal ‘Undermines’ Standard

HEU has rejected an HLRA proposal for employing students under the Provincial Youth Employment Program because of what Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow calls an "HLRA attempt to undermine the HEU standard of wages and benefits."

In April, HLRA proposed rates of pay for students that included a $4.67 per hour rate for a secondary school student.

"Our position is if we agree to a student working $4.67 an hour as a dietary aide, for example, then the next thing we know, HLRA will be saying that this is the wage rate our members should receive, too," said Gerow.

"And besides that wage proposal being a serious attempt to undermine our standard, why should HLRA discriminate against students if the students are going to do the work, then pay them at the standard union rate of pay."

Gerow added that it is up to individual employers to "top up" to the standard wages if they want the government subsidy under the Youth Employment Program.

Columbia View Officers

The Columbia View Unit elected officers for 1981 are: René Folvik, Chairperson; Mary Milne, Vice-Chairperson; Brenda Bent, Secretary-Treasurer; Jeff Young, Clerk-Treasurer.

The Edith Cavell Unit elected officers for 1981 are: Fe Dahvin, Chairperson; Vijay Deo, Vice-Chairperson; Mita Bal, Secretary-Treasurer; Lillian Arain, Trustee; Janelle Sandhu, Trustee; Reeshan Dahya, Trustee; Rene Havel, Conductor; Rejinder Sivela, Warden.

Casual Arbitration Dates

Arbitration dates are being called for as per the addendum of the HEU/HLRA Master Agreement regarding casual employees (Article 1, Section 2).

At an arbitration hearing in November last year, cases were made that there were clear violations of the agreement by the Employer regarding casual employees.

HEU’s position regarding the application of the collective agreement is as follows:

- casuals to be called-in in order of seniority;
- reclassification to regular part-time employee after 180 hours of work in 12 weeks with full retroactivity of seniority and benefits;
- notice of lay-off where hours of work are reduced;
- no additional probationary period where employee is reclassified to regular part-time;
- posting of all temporary positions lasting one month or more (e.g. vacation relief).
Non-Classified Groups To Be Sent Material

HEU will be sending questionnaires and job descriptions to all non-classified groups in the near future. Nursing will be the next group to set up classification committees, to be followed by Stores, Laundry, Housekeeping, Utility/Maintenance and finally, special categories.

HEU's Provincial Bargaining Committee began negotiations May 13 directly with HLRA on the classification of dietary workers.

Giovanna Has 31 Years At Cranbrook Hospital

Giovanna Martin has worked at Cranbrook and District Hospital for over 31 years and the way she ended up in Cranbrook is very interesting.

Born in the mining town of Michel, about 80 miles east of Cranbrook, she was taken to Italy along with her brother and a sister by her mother when her father died in a mining accident. After World War II, her brother talked the family into returning to Michel, which at the time was one of the bigger communities in the East Kootenay. Her brother found a job at the mine easily, however Giovanna and her sister, tried not to work and subsequently travelled to Cranbrook in search of work. They both landed jobs at the Cranbrook hospital in the dietary department.

"The hospital wasn't the one that stands today. In those days, the hospital (which is now a hotel) was run by the Catholic nuns. The facilities were much less sophisticated than the modern hospital we work at now," Martin told The Guardian.

"It was very tough to make a living in the 50's. We were making about $60 a month and paying $40 a month for room and board for a place right at the back of the hospital."

"There wasn't much left at the end of the month, especially for us since we came to Cranbrook with practically nothing. But we somehow managed and can now look back at the experience with humour," added Giovanna.

Giovanna, known as Joanna around the hospital, has been a head cook in the kitchen for a number of years since initially starting as a dietary aide.

"If I were younger, I'm not sure I would do it all over again. I might have chosen something easier, but it's not really that bad at the hospital. The girls in the kitchen all get along really well with each other and that makes the day go by faster."

Sunny Hill 'Volunteer' Memo

Sunny Hill Unit members expressed disbelief to the administrator's request in May, via memo, to have all the hospital employees voluntarily work after hours in order to prepare for the hospital's official opening.

In his May 8th memo to all of the Sunny Hill Hospital For Children employees, Dave Richardson said, in part, "There is not enough staff time nor contract budget remaining to do this work and so I thought a number of us could have some fun touching up the walls during some of our valuable spare time on May 20th."

"I am sure the paint-in will create a few aches and pains, particularly among those of us who aren't used to physical labour and therefore would like to try out the new therapeutic pool to measure is therapeutic benefit."

Violet Hudson, Unit Secretary-Treasurer, told The Guardian the memo was quashed by Richardson the day after it was put up on notice boards at the hospital.

"The members felt that if that type of work was done by Union members, Union wages should be paid for such work," said Hudson.

Crisis In Hospitals Says Cocks

Dennis Cooke (NDP MLA New Westminster) sharply criticized the Social Credit government in May and called for an emergency debate to resolve what he described as a "crisis in B.C. hospitals."

"Throughout the province there are long-term care patients improperly occupying acute-care beds and extensive waiting lists for surgery of all kinds. There is a growing number of incidents where urgent or emergency cases are turned away from our hospitals because of the lack of availability of beds," said Cooke.

Cocks cited the situation in Surrey, where, "In March this year there were 1,400 persons on the waiting list for elective surgery at Surrey Memorial Hospital. The wait can be up to seven months."

At Vancouver General Hospital, according to Gerry Leuk (NDP MLA Vancouver Centre) there are 1,880 persons waiting for elective surgery. "Of these, some 200 wait open-heart surgery," said Leuk.

Gordon Hanson (NDP MLA Victoria) said the situation in Victoria is similar: "The two Victoria hospitals report more than 2,000 persons on the waiting list for surgery. Every doctor in town tells stories of patients who travel from out-of-town for definite surgical appointments, taking time off work and arriving to find there are no beds."

The Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria describes 433 of those on the waiting list as "urgent" cases. These urgent cases must wait an average of two to three months before receiving surgery. To live in the city of Victoria is to run an unacceptable risk because of the failure of Social Credit policy," said Hanson.

Minister of Health Jim Niels was quoted in the news media in May as saying he had "no idea" whether the situation in the two Victoria hospitals was as bad as described by hospital officials.

Maureen Woods, pictured here at the Cranbrook Hospital's switchboard area, has several duties including that of being switchboard operator.

Did you know ...
June 30th Deadline

Although the CU and C Health Services Society itself pays up to $100 to HEU members under the Extended Health Care Plan under the HEU/HURA Master Agreement for prescribed drug bills, any amount over the $100 figure is paid for by Pharmacists.

HEU members are reminded that the cut-off date for applying for reimbursement of expenses under the Extended Health Care Plan under the HEU/HURA Master Agreement is June 30th.

Members Determined

Bebeeth DelaRosa and Maura DelaRosa are determined to fight to the bitter end to obtain the promised standard wages and benefits for HEU members at Windermere.

In an interview with The Guardian while on picket duty, Bebeeth and Maura said it was the first strike they have been involved in.

"This is the first time I have ever been involved in something like this (a strike). At first I was not very angry about the whole thing but after seeing the scale going through each day, it makes me really mad," said DelaRosa.

Maura, who said it was also her first strike, said she was upset with Windermere management for failing to understand the workers' situation.

"The cost of living in Vancouver is very high. I have three children. How am I supposed to make it on a wage of $4.50 an hour? I don't think we are asking for too much," said DelaRosa.

Bebeeth, who is also married and has two children, agreed that the cost of living in B.C. is very high.

"Everything is so expensive. On what we were paid before the strike, it is impossible to raise a family decently," she said.

The Guardian also talked to, Balteer Kaur, a single person, who is said the strike was "a new experience" to her.

"Even for a single person like myself, my wages disappear too quickly. How can $4.50 go the city of Vancouver? Not very far that's for sure and I know that for a fact," said Kaur.

Terrace ‘Fitfest’

Fifteen HEU members from the Terrace Unit took part recently in "Hospital Fitfest ’81," an event sponsored by Action B.C. designed to keep hospital employees in good physical condition.

Terrace Unit Secretary-Treasurer Betty Miefeld said the "fitfest" was a lot of fun and enjoyable for all participants.

"We had a volleyball game one evening and there were exercise classes in the Physiotherapy Department. We all had fun and are hopefully in better shape," said Miefeld.

Swan Valley Agreement

An agreement was ratified in April between HEU and Swan Valley Lodge in Creston.

The agreement, based on HEU’s Master Agreement, expires March 31, 1982. There are 18 HEU members in the Swan Valley Unit.

Charlotte Member Related To U.S. Actor

Ruth Kristofferson gets the same question all the time and it was no different at the April 10 HEU education seminar in Prince George.

"Are you related to Kris Kristofferson?" The Guardian asked.

"Yes, he is my husband's sixth or seventh cousin. It seems everyone asks that question. I guess because Kristofferson isn't too common a name and it is spelled with a K at the front instead of the usual Ch," responded Ruth.

Ruth found out about the family connection with the well-known American singer-actor after her husband's uncle completed a family tree.

"Yes he is a distant relative and we have yet to meet him. Although you never know, someday we might," said Ruth.

Ruth is the Vice-Chairperson of the newly-formed Queen Charlotte Unit at the Queen Charlotte Islands Hospital.
HEU RETIREEs

St. Mary’s Unit
Will Miss Evelyn

Evelyn Vopni, an HEU member at St. Mary’s Hospital in New Westminster since July, 1978, has retired. Evelyn served as Secretary of the St. Mary’s Unit for five years and was also on the Unit’s social committee, according to Unit Chairperson Lynn Halstead.

“Evelyn was responsible for organizing those fantastic Union barbecues and picnics and, like good-naturedness she will be helping again this year,” Halstead told The Guardian.

The Unit has donated $50 as a gift to Sister Vopni for her retirement.

An avid bowler and bingo player, she plans to take life easy and use the extra time to enjoy her family.

“Evelyn is a warm, understanding person who always greets you with a smile and an open heart. She is very much missed by the girls in dietary,” said Halstead.

HEU member Evelyn Vopni has retired from service at St. Mary’s Hospital in New Westminster. Evelyn, shown here at a Unit picnic, served as Unit Secretary for five years.

Maplewood Elected Officers

The Maplewood Manor elected officers for 1981 are Linda Jones, Chairperson; Judy Booker, Vice-Chairperson; Jo-An Van der Burg, Secretary-Treasurer; Rex Matthews, Trustee; Lorraine Sengstaka, Trustee; Sherrill Lawry, Trustee; and George Comper, Trustee. Maria Bosma, Warden.

Shareholder Criticizes Extendicare

Extendicare Ltd., a Toronto-based company that owns health care facilities in Canada and the United States, and recently purchased Mount Paul Private Hospital in Kamloops, was accused by a shareholder of “profiling by trafficking in human lives” at the company’s annual meeting in Toronto in April.

Jessica Hunt, 39, of Toronto, was the only person at the company’s annual meeting to question president Harold Livergreen and chairman Michael Burns about a fire in Mississauga last July that killed 25 persons, according to an April 22 report in the Globe and Mail newspaper.

Mrs. Hunt asked the company’s executives why fire drills were not carried out regularly in the home, as called for in Ontario’s Nursing Homes Act, and why the building had several structural flaws.

“Had the building been fire resistant, only one life would have been lost, said Hunt.

She asked whether any of the $1.50 million profit per bed that Extendicare earned in its 96 health care facilities (3,750 beds in Canada and 28 facilities, 9,942 beds in the United States) would be used to provide “safety conditions and trained staff.”

After the meeting, Livergreen said there was “no simple answer” to Hunt’s concerns about safety.

In answer to a question about Extendicare building an empire out of health care facility profits, Livergreen said that “spinning off profit to various other forms of activity is not necessarily a bad thing. It’s true that nursing homes form our base, but a lot of financial fuel is coming from other investments now, like Crown Life (an insurance company).”

Julia Buhlers Honoured

After 17 years and eight months at Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, Julia Buhlers retirement day was April 15, according to Unit spokesman Bec Watson.

“Julia’s many years were spent mainly at the student nurses’ residence, which is soon to be closed,” said Watson.

A tea was held in Julia’s honour at which time she received a back-pack and a Thermos from the housekeeping staff.

“Julia’s face will certainly be missed at our Unit meetings,” added Watson.

Buhlers’ favourite hobby is birdwatching and she hopes to do more of that during her retirement. Before the bird-watching, however, Julia scheduled a week of fun in Reno in late May.

Royal Jubilee Unit member Julia Buhlers retired April 15 after nearly 18 years of service. Julia plans to spend more time on her favourite hobby of birdwatching during her retirement years.

LPN’s Annual Meeting Held in Vancouver

The Licensed Practical Nurses’ Association of British Columbia held its 10th Annual General Meeting in Vancouver, May 12-15.

The new executive elected during the meeting: Pat Campbell, President; Cheryl McQueen, 1st Vice-President; Eni- nor Turrill, 2nd Vice-President; Helga Rahn, Treasurer; Gerrie Fehr, Corresponding Secretary; Helen Burnett, Recording Secretary; Newsletter Editor, Agnes Magnone; Marilyn Blod- dington, Victoria; Loretta Neil, Annual Convenor; Wenda Elias, Membership and By-Laws; Relations; Evelyn Fallick, Education Chairperson; Helen Buir- ritt, CAPNA Representative; Sandra Tahiourney and Evelyn Fallick, CAPNA delegates.

Vancouver Vocational Institute is holding its 10th grand- ball, Grand Ball of Excellence on July 3.

Ching Finds Home

A stranger wandered into the extended care section of the Cowichan District Hospital a couple of months ago and, according to HEU Duncan Unit Shop steward, Jean Cameron, it has been love at first sight.

“Ching is a stray cat which goes by the name of Ching Ching, and the staff and residents have fallen in love with her,” Cameron told The Guardian.

“We adored her in trying to find the rightful owner, but unfortunately, no one came to claim her. So, with the hospital’s Board’s approval, she has become a fixture in our home,” Cameron said.

“Ching never ceases to delight the residents with her antics and her favourite sleeping place is the ‘in’ basket on my desk,” said Jean.

The Guardian Hospital, June 1981/Page 7
HEU Members On The Job

At Cranbrook and District Hospital
Sam Knows His Way Around The Boiler Room

Sam Cross, a maintenance engineer at Cranbrook and District Hospital, knows his way around a steam boiler and that should come as no surprise since he's been working with them for about 30 years.

Sam moved to Galloway, a small community about 45 kilometres east of Cranbrook, from his home town of Chatham, Ontario, in 1982. "I started as a steam engineer at the sawmill in Galloway in '92. I got a lot of experience while I was there and in 1996 I moved to Cranbrook," recalls Cross.

"I didn't start working at the hospital until 1969, so it's been about 12 years that I've been here," he says.

Sam and his wife Harriet are the proud parents of three boys, Frank, Peter and Russell, all of whom live in the Cranbrook area.

"It was a bit of a hectic sometimes trying to properly raise three boys. My boys were very active and I think about it, we realized it was well worth the trouble. The rewards far outweighed the problems," Cross said and his wife Harriet were thankful they chose to raise their boys in the south-eastern British Columbia.

"As everyone knows, this is really beautiful country in the East Kootenay. We regularly go camping and many lakes around here like North Star and Moyie. We sometimes don't have the time, but lucky we've been to be able to take advantage of the beauty in these parts."

As a maintenance engineer in the four-person department, Sam's responsibilities include the steam and hot water boilers at the hospital. As a maintenance engineer, he mixes chemicals for treating the water and the steam boilers so that the heating and air conditioning function properly.

"We are on 24 hours a day a day in the event of emergencies like power failures, which crop from time to time. Power failures, of course, can affect things like surgery, so we have to respond quickly to calls when we're at home."

"Sometimes emergencies can be of a less serious nature, it was the case recently when two teenage boys were caught in the hospital boiler room.

"The kids were caught between floors and in this case there was some sort of a fight, it all boiled down to one boy hitting the other. We got them out, but I guess they learned their lesson not to fool around with elevators."

"And there are even more "emergencies", like the time a mouse was loose in the attended care wing of the hospital.

"That was pretty funny. There were running women around all over the place, trying to get the mouse away from the mouse. Those kind of emergencies are the easiest to handle."

And there are also Emergencies of the wet kind, like flood which occasionally happens as in the department.

"Floods occur once in a while and the important thing is to quickly find out where the leak is and to get the water cut off. The mopping up can take a long time, too, when you're standing in three or four inches of water," says Cross.

Sam says the crew in the maintenance department works a day shift on an extended hours basis and everyone gets along very well.

"We all like our jobs and that helps to create a healthy working atmosphere. Our job is a responsible job and I always try to do my best."

CUTE Member Supportive

Dear Sir,

Perhaps it is an over-simplification to imply that we, as ambulance attendants, encounter a picture line. It will simply disappear, thus enabling us to live with a "good conscience" to cross it.

A case in point is the Central Park Lodge, 180 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver (across from UBC). Our sisters at Central Park Lodge organized themselves as the Hospital Employees Union, Local 180, well over two years ago, in accordance with the terms and provisions of the B.C. Labour Code (Sec. 6) and were certified as the legitimate bargaining agent by the B.C. Labour Relations Board. Yet, the management of Central Park Lodge, a multi-million dollar real estate and Investment conglomerate — apparently known across Canada for their intransigence towards organized labour — have flatly refused to negotiate a fair contract.

In my opinion this is a flagrant contravention of the province to bargain in good faith as set out in the B.C. Labour Code (Sec. 6) and, as a union, we have the right not to enter their premises — except in an emergency.

Central Park's management has steadfastly refused to offer more than $4.70 an hour to our sisters in their attempt to secure a decent wage (and dignity, job security, and self-respect).

To me, this is a travesty and a slap in the face to every trade unionist in British Columbia. If we continue to cross the picket lines of our sisters at Central Park Lodge without qualifications, we, as trade union, will be contributing to the dilution of the union movement in Canada. Our present Labour Movement — and ignor are the enormous personal sacri- fices made by our forebears over the last century.

After all, many women these days are the sole support of their families, and we today can keep a family, life alone themselves, on $4.70 an hour, and claim it as a benefit?

Frankly yours,

Vincent C. Shea

Editor's Note: The above letter was hand-delivered to HEU's Provincial Office by Brother Shea, who is a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 873.

Did the Guardian, June 1983 / Page 8

FACTS ON THE CANCER CONTROL WORK STOPPAGE

When I read your editorial of April 13 under the heading "The Helpless" I felt as if I was reading my own story. The editorial was based on an emotionalism and sensationalism then on fair fact and comment.

The members of the Hospital Employees Union at the Cancer Control Agency were not, nor were we not sitting in — they were honoring a legal picket line set up by HEU members at Windermere Central Park Lodge, who have been trying since July 1979 to get a first collective agreement.

Not all members of the HEU at the agency were required to stop work. Those who were not receiving essential services were instructed to continue to work so that there would be no immediate or serious threat to the health of those who use the agency's services. In fact, during the picketing additional people were required by the HEU to continue working as they were needed.

Those members of the HEU who had honored the picket line were called to a certain meeting in the agency instead of being locked out. So that in an emergency they would be able to respond.

Further, the picket line set up by HEU members from Windermere was inside the agency, so that other employ- ees would not be faced with a picket line, but could continue to work. Among such employees were registered nurses and paramedical professionals.

The agency must have concluded that essential services were being maintained because it made no apparent effort to control the picketing by arbitration to the public sector, B.C. Labour Relations Board. Instead, the agency appeared to have spent its efforts participating in a showy news conference.

The agency must have been aware it would face legal penalties by using the services of an ally or strike- breaker from the Windermere Central Park Lodge, a dispute brought about by a similar dispute at another institution, the Holy Family Hospital, occurred two years earlier.

At the hospital the matter was settled in less than two hours, but the hospitals took all day to make up its mind not to use the services of the ally or strikebreaker and continue work as normal.

The Windermere employ- ees did not go out on strike as a first choice, but the agency forced them to the picket line by the refusal of the multi- billion dollar, real-estate corporation that owns Windermere to admit home that the services of the Windermere who have been making every reasonable effort to reach a collective agreement by way of arbitration? They have been offered only $4.50 an hour, when the appropriate

standard in the health care field is about $8 an hour. They, who are being fined against a corporate giant that makes private profits at the expense of public funds and uninsured health care.

J. D. GEROW

Business Manager

Cancer Control Agency

[Editor's Note: This letter was published in The Vancouver Sun, April 29, 1981]

Who was sleeping under those covers?

Dear Sir,

As a follow up of your interview with me (May Guardian), I would like to relate a humorous thing that happened to me once when I was an Orderly. I think other HEU members might find it funny.

We had a patient in a private room who had had a leg amputation. He had a habit of sleeping with the utmost in bed with him all the time. We Orderlies were in the habit, when we were on nights, of first going in and reaching under the covers, taking out the urine, emptying it, and then putting it back in place. This particular night, I was off shift and I went in to empty it. You have to appreciate that we never bother to turn on the lights, so all I had was my flashlight and I'm not looking at the patient's face. Well, I'm groping under the covers for the handle to this thing, when all of a sudden a woman's voice screamed, "Sir, what are you doing?"

It was as if I'd been struck by lightning. I dropped the flashlight, let out a yell, and stumbled backwards out of the room. The nurse came running up and asked what was the matter, so I told her. Well, she woke up the ward laughing. She told me that they had put a woman in that room.

This particular night I was on a long time shift for that long, I went over to the further side of the hall. I also told the nurse she better explain to patient what had happened — which she did.